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THE STORY OF

JESUS OF NAZARETH

WITH TEXT-BOOK APPENDIX.

BY MISS L. L. ROBINSON.

"We have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the World."

"And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent."

MILWAUKEE, WIS.:
THE YOUNG CHURCHMAN CO.
1895.

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1895.

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TO THE

DEAR FATHER AND MOTHER

ON EARTH,

WHOSE LOVE HAS EVER BEEN THE GUIDE TO THE

FATHER IN HEAVEN,

THIS BOOK IS AFFECTIONATELY

DEDICATED.

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PREFACE.

THAT the following narrative claims to be nothing more than an outline of the Life presented, the evident scope of the volume renders it needless to state. No attempt has been made to reproduce in full the marvellous discourses, the wealth of Parable, or even all of the most notable miracles of that Life; and while, in the main, the chronological order of events accepted by the leading authorities has been followed, strict adherence to this has not been deemed of paramount importance.

The sole aim of the book is so to attract and interest young readers in the great Subject, itself, that desire will be awakened for the fuller knowledge readily accessible through more comprehensive works; or better yet, to inspire for the Scriptures embodying that knowledge, the love which will lead to deeper study and research.

As an aid to this, an Appendix is added, consisting of a concise yet comprehensive Text-book, which, it is believed, will be found doubly interesting and valuable for the story preceding it. The two, however, can be used together, or apart, as desired.

That the book, as a whole, may be blessed to Him in Whose Name it is offered, is the sincere hope of the author.

Of the various works which have afforded aid and guidance in the preparation of this more condensed history, special and grateful mention would be made of Dr. Geikie's "Life of Christ," and "*Verba Verbi Dei;*" the latter for its careful study of time and place as connected with the events recorded. L. L. R.

GRAHAMTON, KY.,
Eastertide, 1895.

HOLY NIGHT.—*Corregio.*

THE STORY OF

JESUS OF NAZARETH.

I.

A BETROTHAL.

NOT more than an hundred miles north of the city of Jerusalem, and in the beautiful mountainous region of Palestine, called Galilee, the little town of Nazareth stood, or rather climbed, on the furrowed breast of the hillside. One above another, like successive terraces, wound its narrow streets along the rocky slopes, and withal presenting a very picturesque appearance, just now, as the spring sunlight flooded the landscape with its warmth and beauty. Brightly it gleamed on the rugged peaks rising higher yet in the background; richly it tinted to deeper colors the wild flowers blooming abundantly, despite the rocky soil; and generously it imparted its gladness to the light-footed sheep and goats rejoicing in the fresh young grass, now clothing the mountains with verdure.

Peaceful, bright and attractive, the little mountain village always looked at this springtide season; but on the particular day on which our story opens, the usually quiet streets were astir with indications of interest and festivity which, while centering about one of its lowly homes, was evidently shared and appreciated in general.

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It was, in truth, an occasion of special interest. Nothing less than the celebration of a betrothal feast, the promised union of one of the loveliest maidens of the town to one of its most esteemed and respected citizens. Each was of noble birth, and therefore of high social position. Yet, like their people, in general, at this sad period of Jewish history, the outward estate of each was but a lowly one. Nevertheless, the grand heritage of God's chosen race was theirs, and in this instance, coupled with a double nobility; for the two thus soon to be united claimed no less a birthright than that of the royal House of David, and both alike, therefore, members of the illustrious tribe of Judah.

Hence it was an occasion of more than ordinary note, this festal gathering in the little town of Nazareth, especially when remembered that in the day of which we write, a betrothal held all the importance and solemnity of a marriage. In fact, so far as outward observance and social participation was concerned, the one occasion was often made to serve for both; for having thus publicly announced and celebrated their betrothal, the young couple were regarded as in all respects mutually bound, and the ceremony completing the union was generally a very simple one, and consummated whenever desired.

In the present instance, however, even the betrothal festivities were very likely, simple and unpretentious; for these were but lowly homes in the secluded Galilean village. Nevertheless, not wanting was it in hearts loving and true; and a joyous assembly, doubtless, it was which gathered thus, in the springtime gladness, to witness the vows henceforth unit-

ing a pure young heart and its chosen husband and protector.

He was not a young man, this happy bridegroom; in fact, already had he passed the bound of middle age, and this was not his first marriage for which he thus made ready. Yet none the less fondly must he have looked on the fair young bride at his side, and giving herself to him now, more in the spirit of child-like trust and confidence, probably, than the maturer bond which the years to come must develop.

All the more sacred trust must such a bride ever be, and the more so if, as was probable in the present instance, the guardianship of earthly parentage had been removed, leaving the need of loving care and protection all the greater.

He was known as Joseph; and notwithstanding his noble birth, like the majority of his people of that day, he was a manly son of toil, his work being that of a carpenter. Yet not in the least had his lowly occupation detracted from that true nobility of character which has naught to fear from toil, so long as recognizing itself but a fellow-laborer with the Master-Workman, the great Creator. Not in all the region about, perhaps, was there a man more highly regarded by his fellow-men than Joseph, the Carpenter of Nazareth.

Her name was Mary—the Greek form of that older, and at that time, more familiar name of Miriam; and recalling the rare beauty for which the women of Israel had long been noted, while remembering that in the veins of the young bride in question flowed the rich blood of the princely house of David, it may be readily imagined that her face was as fair and sweet

to look upon as later events proved her character noble and beautiful.

All things, therefore, combined to render the occasion one of unwonted interest and pleasure, this betrothal scene in the little town of Galilee; and its rites duly celebrated, happily Joseph returned to his humble work and home, to await the yet happier day to follow, while the gentle Mary withdrew to even closer maidenly retirement to prepare for the consummation of the vows just taken.

Little did either dream of the wondrous events which should alike shadow and irradiate that interval, nor of the destiny appointed that waiting bride, a destiny beyond all that human hearts could picture, and for which, doubtless, God was even now preparing her.

II.

A Glance Backward and Onward.

QUIETLY the days had passed since that happy betrothal feast. A short time, probably, but the little town of Nazareth had resumed its wonted serenity, Mary, the fair bride expectant, still in her maidenly retirement, and the faithful bridegroom busily preparing, doubtless, the new home to which he soon would bring her.

The village life flowed on peacefully. In the great city of Jerusalem, and other centres of population where the oppression of the hated foreign rule was more directly felt, troubles often arose to disturb the peace of the unhappy nation; but they did not often reach these more secluded spots. Peacefully, there-

fore, did the simple people of Nazareth follow their various callings, closely interwoven, as was all Jewish life at that day, with the daily worship and observances of their ancient religion.

Prominently in view, on one of the higher hill-side sites, rose the village Synagogue; and here, as in the revered Temple of Jerusalem, morning and evening beheld the assembly of devout worshippers. All too sadly true was it that here, as in all parts of Judea, at this time, many of those thus outwardly conforming to the requirements of religious duty were fast falling into a soulless, lifeless show of worship, most unworthy of Him whom they professed to know and serve as no other nation on earth. There were faithful hearts, however, still aglow with love and devotion for the God thus worshipped; and among these were Mary and Joseph.

Here it was, then, in the familiar Synagogue, that they often met, doubtless, at the hour of prayer, or on the peaceful Sabbath day. Here it was, too, that often must they have listened with devout hearts to the reading of those Scriptures, the revered Word of God, then, as now, a conspicuous feature of the public service rendered Him.

Here it was that often together had they heard the thrilling story of their own people, Israel; listened with kindling hearts, perhaps, to that eventful, changeful history, telling of that mighty deliverance from the Land of bondage; of the toilsome journey to the Land of Liberty and Promise; of bitter warfare, and noble conquest; of glorious victory, and ignoble defeat; of deepening sin, and ever darker punishment; of a long night of captivity, followed by a morning of

glad restoration; but alas, obscured only too soon by new-gathered clouds of sin and disaster, wherein the beloved Land once more now lay helpless in the hands of its enemies.

And here it was that often had they heard that earlier story, the wondrous history of earth's creation. That infinitely sadder story of man and his boundless fall, from the Child of God to the servant of Sin. That tender story of God's compassionate sorrow, His yearning love toward His fallen child, and the promise in infinite pity bestowed. Some time, some day, a merciful Deliverer should arise; an all-loving Saviour should come into the world to redeem mankind from the bondage of sin, to restore once more man's lost estate, and enable him once more to become the child of God.

To all this the two so dear to one another, and both so dear to God, must have listened often. Together, perhaps, they had talked and pondered, as God's people full often had, of when this wonderful promise should be fulfilled. For more yet had been revealed concerning that Saviour to come. It had been foretold that though none other than the Son of God Himself, He should appear among their own people, God's chosen Race; that He was to be born of a human mother, being perfect Man as well as God, and therefore born of a pure virgin, not a wife, as other mothers, for only thus could He be the Son of God and not the son of an earthly father.

Many, many years had come and gone since that great Promise had first been given. Years so full of sin and the sad record of man's growing estrangement from God, that many hearts had grown weak

and despondent. And since despondency is ever the father of doubt, and doubt of unbelief, many there were among God's own people who had all but ceased to hope for the coming of the promised One.

Perhaps even the Angels in Heaven did not know that the time was now drawing near when the Promise should be fulfilled.

So quietly does God bring His greatest events to pass.

III.

THE SHINING MESSENGER.

WE can not doubt that God is ever preparing a faithful heart for that which He is preparing for it. Therefore, in the wonderful light of after events, it is easy to believe that upon the devout and trusting heart of Mary of Nazareth, these promises and lessons from the Word of God fell with a deeper, more impressive meaning, than upon those listening heedlessly about her.

Perhaps, then, it may have been at some hour of prayerful meditation concerning these very words of promise unfulfilled, that there suddenly came to her a message and a mission affecting not only her own destiny, but that of the whole world!

It was a day still throbbing with the joy and gladness of early Springtime. Out of its winter sleep God had now fully awakened the fruitful earth, and all nature was aglow with happiness as deep as though it held within its breast a secret full of wondrous promise.

Mary, perhaps, had been drawn forth to some peaceful spot amid the verdant hills, rejoicing in the beauty and freshness so much in unison with her own young heart. Or it may have been, and more probably, in the sweet seclusion of her own quiet chamber, and at the hour of prayer, that suddenly there stood before her one who though in form and feature a human being, in countenance and raiment gleamed with such radiant beauty that she was startled to awe-struck silence.

More startling yet the words which thrilled that silence:

"Hail, thou that art highly favored! The Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women!"

The words, the voice, were not of earth; and slowly it dawned on the throbbing heart of the maiden that the Messenger was one not wholly unknown to the pure and faithful of old, one of God's own Angels, who was thus addressing her.

But what could this wonderful salutation mean, offered as might have befitted a princess of high estate? A princess, truly, she was, a daughter of the royal line of David; but in this her lowly home, and the dethroned condition of her hapless people, what could these words of royal greeting mean?

Not lost upon the shining Visitor was her perplexity and agitation; and in gentle tones, yet marked by loving deference, straightway he answered:

"Fear not, Mary. Grace and favor hast thou found with God. Henceforth all generations shall call thee blessed!"

At mention of that holy Name, peace, like a quieting hand, fell on the questioning heart; and the Messenger spoke again:

THE ANNUNCIATION.

"I am Gabriel, Messenger of the most High God. To make known His wondrous will and purpose I am come. Great, indeed, is the mission appointed thee, Mary; for because thou art pure and holy of heart, and faithful to the God of Israel, thou art called to be the Mother of the Saviour of the world! That Saviour so long promised, so long foretold, is soon to come upon earth. God alone His Father; therefore shall He be called the Son of the Highest. Thou His mother. For though truly God, yet must He likewise be truly man, that He may redeem His brother man. Of thee, then, shall He be born; and thou shalt call His Name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins."

With silent, deepening bewilderment, the maiden had listened. But now with questioning heart she cried:

"How can this be! I, a lowly virgin, unwedded even to the husband awaiting me! Surely for some other must this message be; some holy mother in Israel more worthy this wondrous honor!"

Again the heavenly Messenger spoke. "It is God who calls thee; the God to whom nothing is hard, nothing impossible. And that thou mayest more fully know His power and goodness, behold, thy kinswoman Elizabeth, wife of the priest Zacharias, He has also visited, and to her, likewise, even in this her old age, a son is promised. Not as thine, the Son of God,—but one who shall be His messenger, a messenger to go before Him, and proclaim that the Saviour of the world is at hand."

Not less comforting than wonderful were the words thus uttered. Full well she knew the aged relative of which they told, the childless home, and the

joy which now must gladden it. Therefore, though to her maiden heart must still be inexplicable the wondrous mission appointed her, no longer would she question either the power or wisdom of Him who called. Bowing her head in deepest reverence softly she answered:

"I am but the Lord's hand-maiden. Be it unto me according to His word."

Looking up, she found herself alone. Swiftly, silently, even as he had come, so had the shining Messenger departed. The stillness was deep, unbroken. But suddenly, there seemed a yet greater Presence encompassing the pure young soul surrendering itself thus to the will of the Highest, a Presence overshadowing, enfolding her in its mystical power. Then, once more was the Maiden of Nazareth alone, with that marvellous secret throbbing in the depths of her lowly heart.

Slowly there awakened within her a fuller realization of the exalted mission to which she had been called; but with it came also awakening anxieties and forebodings to cloud her joy.

There had been no witness to that interview with the Messenger of God, no ear but her own had heard the wondrous revelation. How should she make others comprehend, or even believe that which had come to her? And ah, what if her word should be doubted! What if those whose love was so dear should question her truth and uprightness in the unfolding of events foretold! Even a mother might find it difficult to believe so bewildering a story; what, then, if Joseph, the tender, loving bridegroom awaiting her, should doubt or question its truth!

IV.

A Long and Lonely Journey.

ALAS, the fears of the young heart so lately called to its high mission, were not groundless. The very wonder of that mission and its message placed it beyond the comprehension of those about her. Perplexed and bewildered by the strange, yet fervently reiterated story, the purely conscientious Joseph himself could but listen in silence; a silence fast yielding to doubt, and finally to distrust and sorrow.

Into his heart and home he could not take one whom he was now compelled, sadly and reluctantly, to believe untrue alike to him and her own pure maidenhood. But a manly spirit will always find room for compassion even while condemning the weak and erring. Joseph's was no exception. In his own heart he buried his overwhelming grief and disappointment, while tenderly shielding, as far as might be, from public censure, the one he loved. Nevertheless, all the more firmly did he obey what he believed the voice of duty, and put from him the fair young bride he would have cherished so faithfully.

Sorrowing, grieving, doubtless, but powerless to vindicate herself, thus did the gentle Virgin of Nazareth taste the first drops of that cup of sorrow which was to be more closely pressed to her lips in years to come. No young soul, surely, ever had greater need to cast itself wholly on God for protection and guidance. It was what He would have her do, and she did not trust in vain.

Suddenly, amid the anguish, and the isolation now closing about her, and its deep longing for human sympathy, Mary remembered the relative of whom the Angel had spoken, her aged cousin Elizabeth. To her, too, had come a wonderful message and promise from God. Who, then, so fitted to believe and comprehend all that the maiden had found impossible to make clear to others!

It was nearly an hundred miles to the old city of Hebron, where long the Priests of God had dwelt, and where now was the home of Zacharias and his faithful wife. A long and lonely journey from the little town of Nazareth, particularly for one unused to travel, and scarce familiar with the mountain roads that stretched between. But the need and the longing of the young heart was great. With renewed prayer to Him on whom she leaned as never before for guidance, her resolution was made; and with a sweet dignity and purpose rare, indeed, in one so young, quietly Mary left the doubting hearts about her, and in that home remote sought the motherly love and counsel she could but hope awaited her.

Nor was she disappointed. Was it human sympathy and confidence she sought? Ah, here was all this, and more. For no sooner had she crossed the threshold of that home of Hebron, than rising with tremulous eagerness, the saintly Elizabeth, herself nobly born, met the weary traveller with greetings a princess royal might have been proud to receive.

"Whence is this to me," she joyously cried, "that the Mother of my Lord should come to me? Blessed art thou among women! And blessed is she which

believeth the word of God, for unto her shall indeed come to pass all that the Lord hath spoken!"

Was it not just this for which the lonely, troubled heart had been yearning! Not merely comfort and sympathy, but some assurance of that wonderful message which, in her sorrow and loneness, possibly, was beginning to grow dream-like and unreal. Here, without one word from her own lips, was not only full confirmation of the glorious promise, but a glowing recognition of that mission to which she had been called.

In the sudden relief, the gladness of comprehension and sympathy thus found, Mary's heart overflowed with joy, and broke forth in a song of such praise, such rapturous faith and hope, that the echoes of the wondrous strain are ringing yet:

"My soul doth magnify the Lord,
And my spirit rejoiceth in God, my Saviour!
For He hath regarded the low estate of His hand-maiden,
And behold, from henceforth shall all generations call me blessed!"

And rising still to loftier strains, the glad song soared yet sweeter and higher, telling as none but a heart attuned by God's own Spirit could tell, the wondrous things which should be accomplished for a perishing world by the Saviour soon to come.

Here it was, then, in this peaceful home, with the devout couple proud to do her honor, that Mary of Nazareth found the joy and comfort her heart had craved. How many an hour must have passed in holy and happy discourse concerning that which, as yet, God had made known to them alone, yet which, in

days to come, should mean so much to the world about them.

So peacefully and happily did the days glide by that three months elapsed before the beloved Visitor prepared once more to seek her distant home. Tender, indeed, must the parting have been. The aged matron all but at the close of life's long journey; the maiden standing yet in its early morn, yet both united now in anticipations so wonderful, in hopes and fears so strangely interwoven!

Scarcely had that parting ended when, to the childless home, there came the promised gift, the child ordained before his birth and sent into the world to be God's chosen messenger. Joyous, indeed, the welcome awaiting him; a welcome which rose to triumphant notes of praise in the heart of the father as he sang:

> "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for He hath visited and redeemed His people.
> And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest;
> For thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways, to give knowledge of salvation to His people!"

Meanwhile, Mary of Nazareth was nearing the end of her journey. Once more she saw the green hills and winding streets of her village home rising before her. Was it with something of pain and reluctance that she looked upon them? She had gone forth from hearts cold and estranged. It would be hard to meet again doubting, distrustful glances, and above all, the sad, averted gaze of him who once had loved her so truly.

Such may have been the thoughts overshadowing the heart of Mary on her homeward way. But God

has many ways of brightening the end of anxious journeys, and of cheering the path of them He leads.

Wearily the days had come and gone for Joseph the carpenter.

Brooding in silence over his heavy grief, he strove to pursue his wonted tasks, but his work flagged often; and thus, one day, in the heat of the sultry noon, from weariness of heart as well as hand, the tools dropped from his relaxing fingers, his head drooped on the rude bench before him, and his eyes closed in heavy slumber.

It is not difficult to picture the dreams that visited such moments; the happy fancies, followed only by the sad and troubled waking. But lo, now as he slept, suddenly, like a shining vision, there stood beside him one whose voice and words were not of earth, but Heaven; and clearly there fell upon his ear the heavenly message:

"Fear not, Joseph, to take to thy heart and home thy promised wife, Mary. All that she hath said unto thee is true. The Son which shall be born unto her is none other than the Son of God, the long-promised Saviour of the world. And thou shalt call His name JESUS; for He shall save His people from their sins."

With throbbing, wondering heart, the sleeper awoke. He must go out among the hills to give breath to the joy and gladness within him. And here it was, perhaps, in the quiet of the peaceful evening, that as she neared the end of her weary journey, Mary was met with reverent, loving greetings by him whose only care, henceforth, should be the trust thus given to his keeping, a trust now doubly dear and sacred.

V.

The Great Promise Fulfilled.

LONG since had the bright Spring ripened into Summer; the Summer had mellowed into Autumn; and now the first mild days of Winter were at hand, when, to the little town of Nazareth, as to all cities and villages of Palestine, came information of a decree issued by the Roman governor. It was the command of a tax to be paid by all people of his dominion; and in order that a census at the same time be taken of all the various nations, tribes and peoples composing, at this time, the Roman empire, it was decreed that this tax should be paid not where the subject might be living, but in the principal city of his tribe, or nation, the head of every household registering there at the same time the number of his family.

As has been said, both Joseph and Mary were of the House of David, of the tribe of Judah. Not in Nazareth, therefore, could the tribute be paid. Within six miles of the city of Jerusalem stood the little town of Bethlehem, long known as "The City of David," and the ancient seat of the tribe of Judah.

Here it was, then, that with all the members of that tribe, Joseph must go, in obedience to the imperial command; and, unwilling to leave his young wife, now more dependent than ever on his tender care, together they started, Mary probably on one of the gentle donkeys commonly used in that country, Joseph walking at her side, the early Winter of Pales-

tine offering no difficulties to such travel; for flowers still brightened the roadside, and the air was milder than many a Spring day of colder climes.

As may be imagined, however, the progress of the travellers was slow, traversing, as they must, some ninety miles of winding, rugged roads. Consequently, they were late in reaching the town of Bethlehem—so late, indeed, as to find the only inn of the place hopelessly crowded with the many drawn hither by purposes similar to their own. Not a room, not a bed for the weary pilgrims; not a resting-place, in truth, save a rocky cave or grotto in the hillside near, frequently used in that cavernous country, not only as a shelter for beasts of travel, but where travellers made for themselves a bed, when, as now, the tavern happened to be overcrowded.

Here it was, then, in this lowliest of resting-places, a bed of clean straw their only couch, the patient beasts of burden their only companions, that Joseph and Mary uncomplainingly sought their rest.

And lo! here it was, also, that at about the hour of midnight, while all the world lay hushed in slumber, God's mighty purpose was accomplished. The great Promise was fulfilled. And into the world came the Infant Saviour, Child of God and Child of Mary, a straw-lined manger His only cradle!

Marvellous, in truth, it is to think of an event so thrilling in all its measureless meaning, coming thus silently to a silent world. But, if earth was silent, Heaven was not. Out upon the still night air, awakening the echoes of the sleeping hills, there floated suddenly a pæan of music such as earth had never heard before, unless, perhaps, when in like strains the

Morning Stars sang together on the morn of man's creation. But gladder yet rose now this burst of praise, till, swelling louder, and nearer yet to earth, it roused to startled awe a band of shepherds watching their flocks in the quiet night.

Behold, the midnight sky was luminous, and nearer still came that wondrous song, chanted clear by angel voices:

> "Glory to God in the highest,
> And on earth peace, good-will toward men."

Affrighted, amazed, the shepherds would have fled. But again their throbbing hearts were stilled by words filling them with yet greater wonder:

"Fear not," said an angel voice beside them, "behold I bring you good tidings of great joy; and not to you alone, but to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord! By this shall you know Him: you shall find the Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger."

A moment more, and the shining host, with their joyous song, their lingering radiance, had passed away; and starting now from their trance of wonder, eagerly the shepherds cried one to another:

"Come, let us go to Bethlehem, the city of David, that we may indeed see this great thing which has been made known unto us!"

Quickly they sped to the silent town; and there, guided by that which was to be unto them the sign and token—*a manger cradle*—they found Him, the Infant Saviour, with Mary and Joseph watching over Him.

Thus, then, had the great Promise been fulfilled.

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Wearily the days had come and gone for Joseph the carpenter.

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V.

The Great Promise Fulfilled.

LONG since had the bright Spring ripened into Summer; the Summer had mellowed into Autumn; and now the first mild days of Winter were at hand, when, to the little town of Nazareth, as to all cities and villages of Palestine, came information of a decree issued by the Roman governor. It was the command of a tax to be paid by all people of his dominion; and in order that a census at the same time be taken of all the various nations, tribes and peoples composing, at this time, the Roman empire, it was decreed that this tax should be paid not where the subject might be living, but in the principal city of his tribe, or nation, the head of every household registering there at the same time the number of his family.

As has been said, both Joseph and Mary were of the House of David, of the tribe of Judah. Not in Nazareth, therefore, could the tribute be paid. Within six miles of the city of Jerusalem stood the little town of Bethlehem, long known as "The City of David," and the ancient seat of the tribe of Judah.

Here it was, then, that with all the members of that tribe, Joseph must go, in obedience to the imperial command; and, unwilling to leave his young wife, now more dependent than ever on his tender care, together they started, Mary probably on one of the gentle donkeys commonly used in that country, Joseph walking at her side, the early Winter of Pales-

tine offering no difficulties to such travel; for flowers still brightened the roadside, and the air was milder than many a Spring day of colder climes.

As may be imagined, however, the progress of the travellers was slow, traversing, as they must, some ninety miles of winding, rugged roads. Consequently, they were late in reaching the town of Bethlehem—so late, indeed, as to find the only inn of the place hopelessly crowded with the many drawn hither by purposes similar to their own. Not a room, not a bed for the weary pilgrims; not a resting-place, in truth, save a rocky cave or grotto in the hillside near, frequently used in that cavernous country, not only as a shelter for beasts of travel, but where travellers made for themselves a bed, when, as now, the tavern happened to be overcrowded.

Here it was, then, in this lowliest of resting-places, a bed of clean straw their only couch, the patient beasts of burden their only companions, that Joseph and Mary uncomplainingly sought their rest.

And lo! here it was, also, that at about the hour of midnight, while all the world lay hushed in slumber, God's mighty purpose was accomplished. The great Promise was fulfilled. And into the world came the Infant Saviour, Child of God and Child of Mary, a straw-lined manger His only cradle!

Marvellous, in truth, it is to think of an event so thrilling in all its measureless meaning, coming thus silently to a silent world. But, if earth was silent, Heaven was not. Out upon the still night air, awakening the echoes of the sleeping hills, there floated suddenly a pæan of music such as earth had never heard before, unless, perhaps, when in like strains the

Morning Stars sang together on the morn of man's creation. But gladder yet rose now this burst of praise, till, swelling louder, and nearer yet to earth, it roused to startled awe a band of shepherds watching their flocks in the quiet night.

Behold, the midnight sky was luminous, and nearer still came that wondrous song, chanted clear by angel voices:

> "Glory to God in the highest,
> And on earth peace, good-will toward men."

Affrighted, amazed, the shepherds would have fled. But again their throbbing hearts were stilled by words filling them with yet greater wonder:

"Fear not," said an angel voice beside them, "behold I bring you good tidings of great joy; and not to you alone, but to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord! By this shall you know Him: you shall find the Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger."

A moment more, and the shining host, with their joyous song, their lingering radiance, had passed away; and starting now from their trance of wonder, eagerly the shepherds cried one to another:

"Come, let us go to Bethlehem, the city of David, that we may indeed see this great thing which has been made known unto us!"

Quickly they sped to the silent town; and there, guided by that which was to be unto them the sign and token—*a manger cradle*—they found Him, the Infant Saviour, with Mary and Joseph watching over Him.

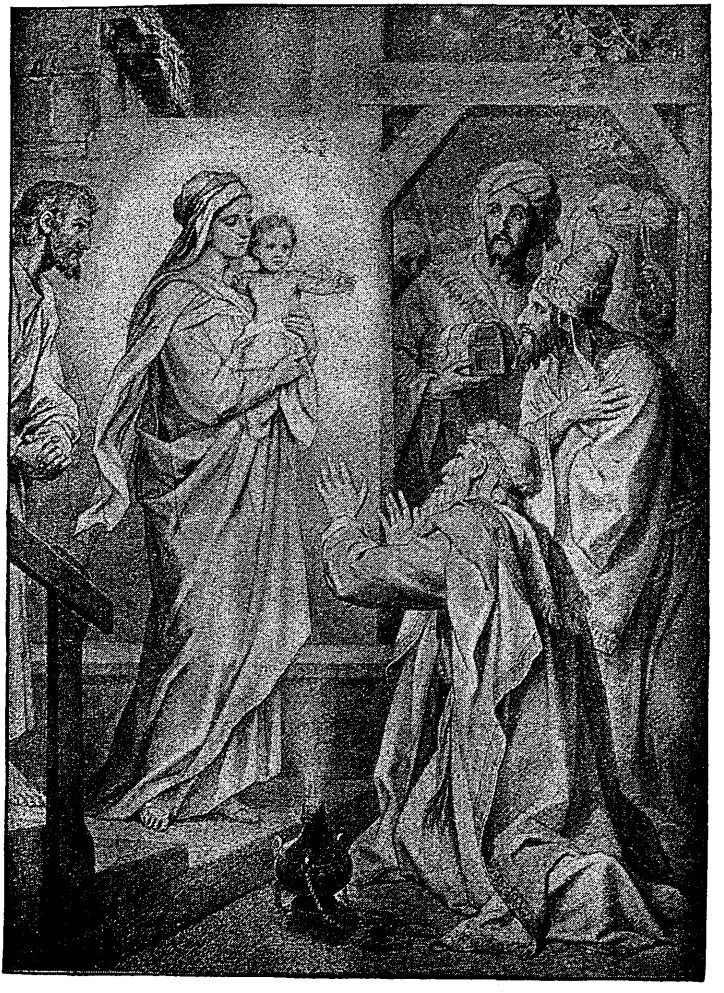
Thus, then, had the great Promise been fulfilled.

In God's own time, the Redeemer of the world had come. Not as a mighty King, dazzling the world with power and glory. As a helpless Infant, truly Man as well as God, that as man He might live man's life from the cradle to the grave.

Therefore, though the Son of God, in all things was He to be obedient to God's laws to man. Hence, when but eight days old, there was placed upon Him, as upon all the sons of God's chosen people, the mark of Circumcision, the mark commanded of God as the sign and seal of His covenant with Israel; and even as the angel had instructed Mary, there was at that time given Him the Name of Jesus—that Name to be known later throughout the world as none other ever has been, or can be; the Name which in itself means Saviour.

Within their own hearts, however, did Mary and Joseph hold the wondrous secret concerning the Holy Child thus entrusted to their keeping. Difficult, indeed, would it have been to make known to others that which they themselves could but dimly comprehend. But there was to be yet one more witness who should confirm—to their hearts, at least—the glorious revelation which, as yet, they could but ponder dreamily.

It was when the infant Jesus was forty days old, those days having been quietly passed, doubtless, in the town of Bethlehem, that He was borne to the city of Jerusalem; there, in the Temple, like every first-born son of Israel, to be solemnly dedicated to God. A strange and beautiful thought. He, so truly the Son of God, now as the son of man to be dedicated to that Father in Heaven whose will on earth



THE PRESENTATION IN THE TEMPLE.

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He had come to do. It is not strange that the event should have been marked by a new and impressive confirmation of the promise thus fulfilled.

Dwelling at Jerusalem, at this time, was an aged and devout servant of God, whose name was Simeon. Long years had he watched, with patient hope and faith, for the coming of the promised One, through whom, as he well knew, should alone be accomplished God's blessed promise of salvation to Israel. Nor is it strange that he waited and watched as did few, in that day of hope deferred; for to him it had been made known, through God's own Spirit, that he should not pass from earth till his own eyes had rested on this promised Saviour.

In the prayerful, holy Temple, therefore, did the aged man spend ever more constantly his fleeting days; that Temple in which, long since, it had been declared the Saviour of the world should some day suddenly appear. And here it was that the white-haired watcher sat, on that day when, with the Child Jesus in her arms, and accompanied by Joseph, Mary of Nazareth came to offer her first-born Son to God.

It was no unusual sight; for many a young mother came thus to present alike her thanksgivings and her offerings for the priceless gift which God had sent. Perhaps the old man sitting there scarce raised his eyes as the familiar group approached. But instantly, even as his gaze rested but a moment on the beautiful face of the Infant, there was a Voice within his heart which all but stilled its beating! Before him—here, in the Form of that little Child—was the Saviour for whom so long he had watched and waited!

Stopping not to doubt or question, with tremulous joy the saintly man arose, and from the arms of the wondering mother reverently he clasped to his throbbing heart the Child so precious to his sight; then, lifting to heaven his fast-fading eyes, in fervent content he cried:

"Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word; for mine eyes have seen the salvation which Thou hast prepared; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel!"

Then, to Mary, listening in raptured silence, he continued: "Great indeed, and glorious is the mission appointed this thy Child; but," he added, slowly and sadly, "through thine own soul shall pierce a sword of sorrow!"

What could they mean, those strange, sad words? She could not tell. Turning silently away, deeply she pondered them in her own thoughtful heart.

VI.

A Midnight Journey.

IT was but a short time after that impressive scene in the Temple of Jerusalem that upon the streets and principal thoroughfares of that city appeared a singularly notable company. Many were the strangers visiting, from time to time, the well-known Jewish capital; but in the group now entering there was apparent an eagerness of motive and purpose rare among travellers, in general; and as they advanced their progress was ever and anon interrupted by a strange and eager inquiry addressed to them they met.

Leading the little procession, seated on richly caparisoned camels, were three foreigners, evidently men of high estate, and with mien and countenance bearing not only the impress of noble caste, but a cultivation and learning markedly distinguishable from the dark-skinned servants attending them.

It was from their lips that ever more eagerly fell that bewildering question: "Tell us, we pray thee, where is He that is born King of the Jews? We have seen His Star, afar in the East, and have come to offer our gifts and homage!"

What could it mean, these searchers from afar, and their startling quest!

"The King of the Jews!" Alas, was not Herod the only king that unhappy nation could claim; Herod, the tyrant, who, though of Jewish birth, was a traitor to his country and a servile vassal of Rome. Who, then, this new-born King thus sought by rich and noble worshippers from the East?

It is not strange that as the thrilling query passed from lip to lip, quickly it reached the palace itself, reached the ear of the proud and haughty Herod, and startled him to anger, amazement, and vague apprehension. Who but he the King of the Jews? Whom, then, could these strangers from afar be seeking?

Suddenly, in the dim recesses of memory, there awoke in the mind of the godless monarch, half forgotten prophecies proclaimed by the Word of God, and echoing still in faithful hearts. Prophecies of One, some day to come, born of God's chosen people, Who should be called "Wonderful," "The Son of God," "Prince of Peace," and "King of kings."

More than ever startled, hastily now he summoned

to his presence the wisest men of Jerusalem, and recalling to their minds this prophecy of old, eagerly he enquired of them where it was that this promised One was expected to appear?

Already, perhaps, had the same thought been stirring the hearts of those before him, with mingled hope and fear; for now with scarce a moment's delay, promptly they answered:

"In the little town of Bethlehem, O, king; for thus did one of our prophets long since declare: 'And thou, Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda; for out of thee shall come a GOVERNOR that shall rule my people Israel.'"

Only six miles distant lay the town of Bethlehem; and here at his very door stood the noted strangers eager to pay their homage to the new-born King. No wonder that the jealous heart of Herod trembled alike with fear and indignation. Not strange, perhaps, that he felt some quick, decisive step, any expedient, however cruel or crafty, not only justifiable, but necessary. At any moment might the ardent heart of this Jewish people be fired to seek this new-born King, so long foretold, and proclaiming some imposter their God-sent sovereign, a fast spreading insurrection follow, in which he, Herod, should be ignominiously dethroned, perhaps slain.

It was no time, then, to hesitate, or question. But he must act cautiously, craftily. Sending, therefore, a courteous invitation to the strangers, who had paused in Jerusalem, partly for rest, partly for further inquiry, with unfeigned interest he talked with them of the object of their journey, and expressing his regret in being unable to direct them definitely, never-

theless, urgently counselled them to pursue their journey to Bethlehem. "There search carefully for the young Child," he commanded, "and when you have found him," he concluded fervently, "hasten back to me, I implore you, that I, too, may go to pay my homage."

With renewed hope and interest the travellers left the presence of Herod to continue their eager quest; and even as they turned their faces toward Bethlehem, the bright Star, which had first inspired the long journey, appeared like a luminous Guide above the hills of Judea. Once more it gladdened the eyes of these Star-readers from afar; and gliding straight before them, on and on, it moved, through the starry host, till finally it stood, its radiant beams resting immediately above the silent City of David; above the house wherein Joseph and Mary found temporary shelter, before returning to their own home in Nazareth.

And here it was, that with hearts aglow with joy and wonder, the eager pilgrims found him they sought; the Infant Jesus upon whom no sooner looking, than, deep within, rose the glad conviction that this was, indeed, the new born King whose starry Messenger had called them afar. Unhesitatingly obeying that voice within, and the custom of their own Eastern land, prostrate they fell before Him, and in lowliest deference and homage, brought forth their gifts with which to do Him honor, a tribute of shining gold, of costly perfumes, frankincense, and myrrh.

But they might not linger. Full of the joy of having found Him they sought, and eager to fulfil their promise to the waiting Herod, they purposed but a

short rest ere retracing their steps to the city of Jerusalem. But even as they slept, the Voice of Him who slumbereth not spoke to them in a dream, bidding them return not by the way of the great city, but take their homeward journey by some other route.

Eagerly, impatiently, Herod waited. From his lofty towers ceaselessly he watched the return of the travellers. But slowly there dawned upon his guilty conscience the suspicion that his command had been disregarded; and from this very fact, all the more fearful that the search had been successful, his heart was the more filled with anxious forebodings of possible conspiracy. Stung to ungoverned rage, and trembling lest even now too late, instantly he resolved upon a most cruel, but, as he thought, most successful expedient. Foiled in his designs on the one little life he sought, he would send his soldiers on the morrow, and every male child under two years of age in the town of Bethlehem should fall under the ruthless sword!

Surely there could be no escape now for the newborn King. This was man's device; terrible and sweeping as it was, in human purpose, it fell but as a shadow on God's great plan.

That very night, once more beside the sleeping Joseph stood one of God's shining Messengers; quickly the trusty guardian was bidden to rise, take the young child and His mother, and even yet, while the night shadows linger, hasten away from the land of Judea, pausing not till in the distant land of Egypt a safe shelter and refuge be found.

Startling indeed must that sudden command have been. But there was neither delay nor question. Out

into the silent night the little group passed on their long and untried journey, saddened, anxious, as they must have been, yet looking up with trusting faith to Him to whom the darkness is no darkness at all, and who undoubtedly would prove Himself their Guide and Keeper.

Nevertheless, once more, no doubt, recurred to the yearning mother-heart of Mary those unforgotten words of the aged Simeon. Had the time come when that "sword" foretold was indeed to pierce her trembling heart?

No; not yet. But into the hearts of the mothers of Bethlehem was the sword of anguish, indeed, thrust deep. With the steps of the early morning came the heavier tread and the gleaming spears of Herod's soldiers upon the sleeping town; and in every home where rang the voice of boyish baby glee, the light went out in the gloom of death; while from the heart of Bethlehem arose that exceeding bitter cry which ages before had startled a prophet in his dreams, the cry of mothers weeping for their little ones, and refusing to be comforted because they were no more.

VII.

A Memorable Visit to the Great City.

IT had been truly a long and lonely journey, that flight to the land of Egypt, not less than some three hundred miles; but it was accomplished in safety, and once there, the lone exiles, still cherishing their wondrous secret in silence, found clannish, friendly hearts to welcome them, doubtless, in the Jewish

THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT.

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THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT.

colonists dwelling at that time in various portions of Egypt.

And here it was, Joseph plying his ever useful trade, no doubt, amid his new surroundings, that the little family remained, ever hoping, ever waiting, we may well believe, for the divine word which should permit them to return to their own loved land. Here it was, therefore, in this foreign country, so strangely ordered, as it seemed, that the infant Jesus passed the earlier years of His earthly existence, until the Father, by whom He had been sent in to the world, should call him out of Egypt, and place Him again amid His chosen people Israel.

To the relief of all hearts, Herod, the tyrant, was at last dead; and once more came now the welcome Messenger to Joseph, bidding him return with his precious charge to the land of Judea.

But alas, in Herod's place reigned his son Archelaus, a tyrant who, if weaker, was not less wicked than his brutal father. Learning this, Joseph dared not venture within the province of Judea itself, but quietly sought once more the secluded mountains, and the more retired life of Galilee.

Not since that memorable journey to Bethlehem, so long before, had either Joseph or Mary, probably, entered the familiar streets, the well remembered paths of the little town of Nazareth; and with glad hearts, indeed, must they now have climbed the winding road, leading them once more to the peaceful home, and the loving friends so tenderly remembered in that long separation.

Eventful, indeed, had been the years which had passed, few as they were in number; more eventful

than the lowly minds about them could have believed, or than the two thus returning cared to relate. It was for God to make known, in His own good time, the revelation entrusted to them; and since the hurried flight and sojourn in Egypt had, doubtless, cut short the eager inquiries, the investigation which must otherwise have followed the visit of those notable strangers from the East; and since the aged couple of Hebron, Zacharias and Elizabeth, had probably passed away, in that same interval, the Virgin-mother, and Joseph were alone the keepers of that marvellous secret, in which was enfolded the salvation of a world.

Pondering all these things, therefore, in the privacy of their own hearts only, once more they took up their quiet life in the lowly home of Nazareth, Joseph returned to his humble vocation, Mary to the simple duties of her village sphere; while the Child Jesus developed daily, as we may suppose, in that peaceful, pure life which He alone could live, Child of God and child of man, wiser, more lovely and lovable than any other child could be, yet in all respects one of earth's little ones, save that He knew no sin.

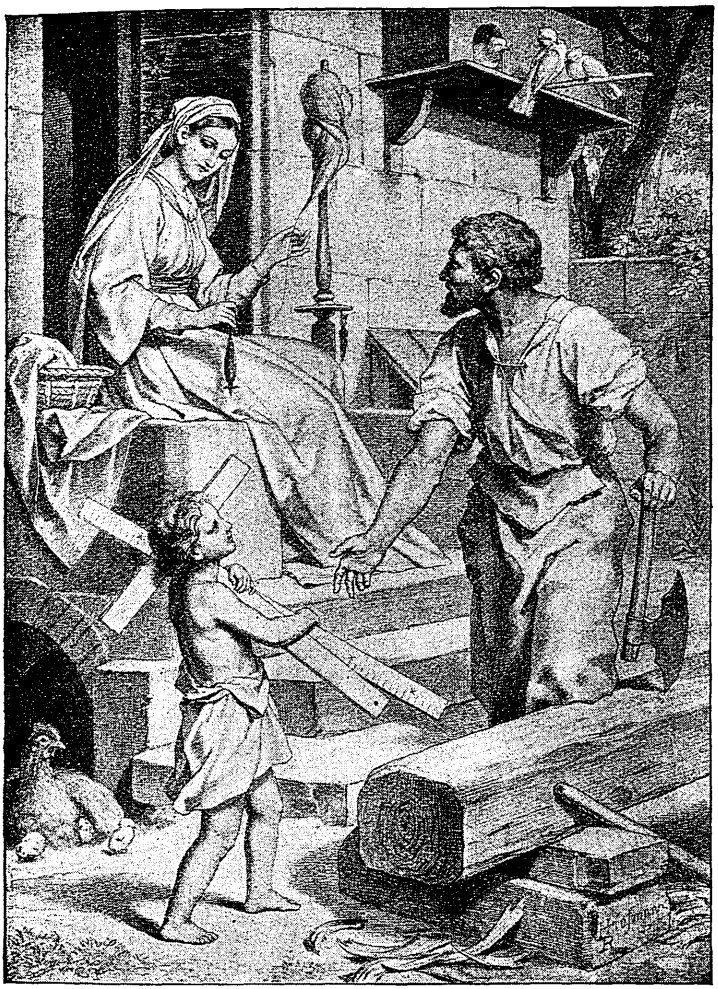
Thus the years passed quietly by, till the boy Jesus was twelve years of age; the age at which Jewish boys entered more fully upon the duties and responsibilities of life, and especially upon the observances of the religious life. It was the age, in fact, at which youth assumed outwardly the obligations of that Church in which, in infancy, it had been received; very much as in our own day, young hearts reaching maturer age, are expected to take upon themselves more fully the duties and service of the Church of

which, since infancy, perhaps, they have been none the less truly members.

It was at this time, therefore, at the age of twelve, that for the first time, the Boy Jesus accompanied his mother and Joseph to the city of Jerusalem, where yearly they went to be present at the great Feast of the Passover.

This was the most notable observance of the whole Jewish Church year; and very dear it was to the hearts of the people, commemorating as it did, that greatest event in their history, when from the land of bondage and misery they were delivered by the mighty Hand of God. Year by year, therefore, was the great event thus recalled, and the story told anew, of how, on that night of Egypt's terrible visitation, the Angel of Death went through the land, but above every doorway sprinkled with the blood of the lamb placed there in obedience to God's own command, the Angel "passed over," leaving unharmed the trembling souls within.

It is not strange, therefore, that dear, indeed, had this great memorial ever been to the people of God; and though, as with so many other features of their worship, it had lost much of its spiritual beauty and meaning, yet its outward forms were still strictly observed. Year by year was the paschal lamb still slain, and the story of that wonderful deliverance still recalled; and there were doubtless, many faithful, yearning hearts who still entered with deepest devotion into the sacred rites, looking to the time when the true Lamb of God should come, He of whom the lamb thus offered was but a type, and by the shedding of whose blood, the world should indeed be



THE HOME IN NAZARETH.

delivered from the bondage of sin, and the sentence of death.

Here it was, therefore, in the city of Jerusalem, that from all parts of the world, not only devout Jews, but people of all nationalities came, since this Feast of the Passover had become not only a great religious observance, but a kind of yearly gathering for all purposes, a kind of "International Fair," on a small scale, as it might now be called, centering in the world renowned city of Jerusalem.

A very great event, then, it was in the life of a boy when, for the first time, he should find himself in the great city, at this eventful season; and here it was, and under these circumstances, that for the first time since His infancy, Jesus entered the great gates, and stood amid the stirring scenes, the ever changing, ever shifting whirl of human life about Him. What a contrast to the silent hills of Galilee, the peaceful glades of Nazareth which, up to this time, had alone met the gaze of those pure, thoughtful young eyes! What wonders lay ready to attract Him now, on every side! And yet, from all that occurred, later, we can imagine that it was with singularly calm, attentive, yet unexcited gaze that He looked about Him, passing through the crowded streets as one who with heart and thoughts fixed on other things, might note, without being unduly absorbed by passing objects.

Thus it was that He passed on, in company with Mary and Joseph, till before Him suddenly rose the glittering pinnacles, the shining dome of the Temple. And now the eyes which had looked so quietly on those noisy scenes about them, fixed their gaze on the

beautiful edifice, with an expression of deep, unfathomable interest.

Often had He seen it doubtless, in imagination; for to every Jewish child the Temple was familiar through constant description and reverent mention. But for the first time the Son of God dwelling thus upon earth, stood now within the courts of His Father's House; and as the strains of glorious music burst upon His ear, as the rich harmonies of praise, the deep undertones of worship rolled about Him, His soul could but be stirred with emotions we can never know, and His whole Being moved as with responsive chords.

But not only was He thus moved and attracted by the grand service of worship. With an attention beyond His years, He listened eagerly to the reading of the Sacred Books, those Scriptures with which, as to every Jewish boy, He had been made familiar, and which to Him had ever seemed to yield their treasures of wisdom and knowledge with a clearness which must often have astonished His mother and Joseph. It was now to astonish others.

Drawn together by the special observances of the occasion, not only the learned men of Jerusalem, but others from afar, improved the opportunity afforded for special meetings and council, in which the discussion of the sacred law and doctrines was ardently encouraged. Learned "doctors," as they were called, making the study of God's Word the highest aim of life, and by whom the smallest points of difference were argued with ceaseless ardor. Thus did they often assemble between the hours of worship, in the Temple, little disturbed doubtless by outsiders, who,

for the most part, spent all such hours amid the attractions of the great city without.

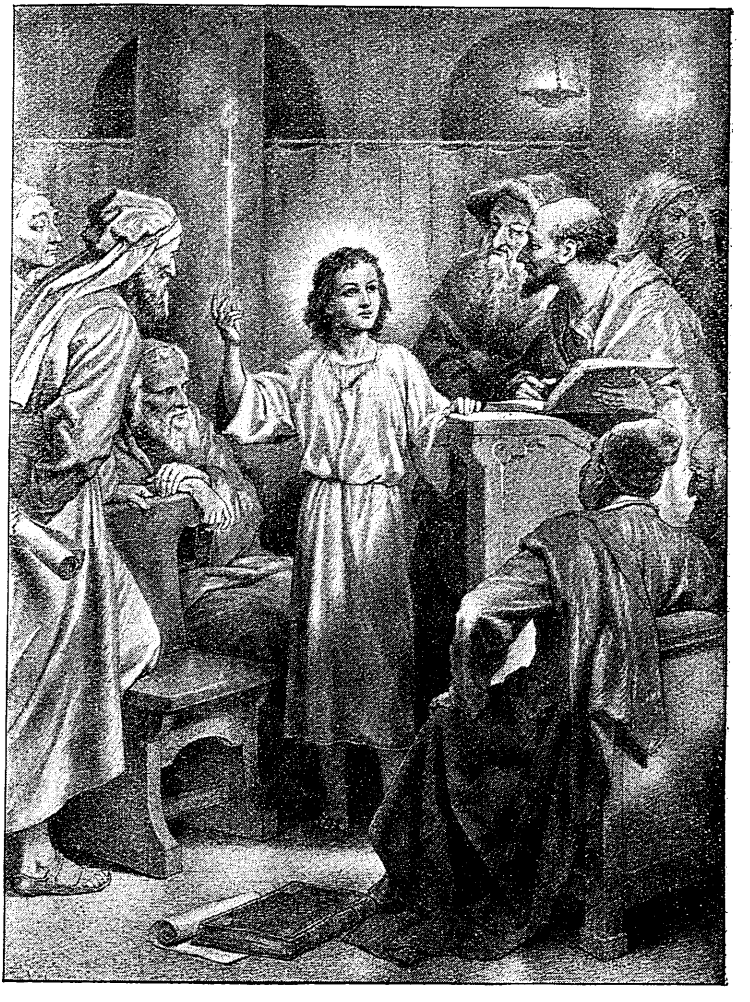
For seven days this season of sacred and worldly interest so strangely blended, continued; when at the end of that time, once more the crowd, increasing daily, began to turn its face homeward; and great as had been the throngs entering the gateways earlier, greater still was the procession now moving out, all starting forth at nearly the same time, and all eager to accomplish as speedily as possible, the home journey.

Thus it happened, less strangely than might be imagined, that in the pushing, jostling, hurrying crowd, Mary and Joseph became separated from the young companion of their journey, and had travelled a whole day before discovering that he was not of their company.

Not doubting that He was with some of the many friends and acquaintances in the large party, attracted possibly by other youths of His own age, they could not believe for a time that He was really missing. But looking now more carefully, as the evening approached, to their dismay and alarm, it became only too apparent that He had been left behind!

Left, and in that great city alone! What might not have happened to him, this the Child in Himself so precious, and a trust ever doubly sacred in their keeping. Once more, perhaps, did those never to be forgotten words of the saintly Simeon flash through the heart of Mary. Was this the sword of sorrow, foretold, now overhanging her?

Sorrowing, fearing, and filled with self-reproach, hastily they retraced their steps, journeying all



WITH THE DOCTORS IN THE TEMPLE.

through the weary night, doubtless, in the deepening anxiety; on and on, till once more they stood within the great city. Yet where or of whom should they seek Him?

To the third day was the anxious search prolonged. But was ever mother's sorrow so truly turned to joy! To the Temple at last the seekers had turned their steps; whether with thoughts of finding their quest rewarded, or whether that they might there lift up their hearts in fervent prayer, we may not know; but here it was that a sight as welcome as it was unexpected and beautiful met their gaze.

Seated in the midst of the learned doctors, still in council assembled, sat the Boy Jesus, His fair young face aglow with interest and attention so absorbing, as plainly to indicate that all else, for the time, had been forgotten. Was it not the Word and message of *His Father* which was thus being ignorantly interpreted by those about Him? What could be of such high importance, such absorbing interest to Him as the revelation of that Word to these dull hearts whom His Father thus sought to reach and uplift?

With growing wonder had they listened to Him, these older minds, so sure of their own learning and wisdom. But these were strange questions, and answers which the unknown, fearless Boy in their midst was offering; whence had He gained such wisdom, such wondrous knowledge of the hidden things of God?

Wondering, scarce less, Mary and Joseph stood, for a moment, bewildered by the picture before them; till, with all a mother's mingled joy and reproach, she hastened forward exclaiming:

"Oh, my Son, why have you thus dealt with us? Know you not that for three days your father and I have sought you, anxious and sorrowing?"

Lifting His pure, sinless face to hers, with something of tender surprise and reproach in His gaze, He answered her (From force of habit, only, had she used these words "your father," referring to Joseph, as was habitual to those ignorant of His true birth. But in the clear, calm words which now answered her there was the soft accent of rebuke which she, at least, should understand):

"My *Father?*" said that earnest gaze; and quietly the words added: "Did you not know that I must, indeed, be about My Father's business?"

It was as though He had whispered, "I thought you would understand, Mother; I thought you would know that I could have lingered with but one purpose, one motive only—the work of My Father in Heaven."

Nevertheless, now, at her desire, with all the gentle, loving obedience which, from His childhood, He had yielded to those in authority over Him, willingly He resigned His own will and pleasure, and accompanied His mother and Joseph back to the quiet, secluded home of Nazareth.

Therefore, uncomplainingly, He returned to His lowly village life; and all the more did Mary, the adoring, wondering mother, ponder in her own heart what should be the end of the strange, beautiful mystery surrounding the Child thus entrusted to her earthly care and keeping.

VIII.

A Voice from the Wilderness.

EIGHTEEN years had passed away since that memorable visit to Jerusalem, and the Boy Jesus' first attendance on the Feast of the Passover. Eighteen years of quiet life in the little town of Nazareth, where, amid the hills and glades of Galilee, heart, mind and soul had expanded, year by year, even as the human nature in which they dwelt had developed, attaining finally the full measure of perfect manhood.

Just how those years had been spent may be best conjectured by the character and work of those that followed. And since it is evident that Jesus had come into the world for the express purpose of living man's life in full, not some rare, exceptional life, but the simple, daily lot of mankind in general, with all its stern realities and difficulties, we can not doubt that these early years were passed in faithful, manly labor, blended, as such labor may ever be, with constant communion with that unseen One whom He had recognized at so early an age as truly his Father.

How close and constant this communion between the Father and Son must have been we can readily understand, remembering that in reality they were but One; One in the great longing and yearning to save mankind; One in the great plan and purpose by which alone this could be done; and One in that divine Nature, which though now taking upon itself also the nature of Man, was not the less truly God, even as every child of earth bears within him the

blended nature of father and mother. With Jesus, being in all things perfect, these two Natures were likewise perfect; perfect God, and therefore One with His Father; perfect Man, therefore One with the human nature of His mother. More and more constant, therefore, became His communion with God, more and more fervent his sympathy with His fellow-men, as this two-fold nature expanded. The more readily, therefore, can we understand how that none other but just such an One, linked alike to earth and Heaven, could have served as the one true Mediator to bring mankind back to God, that Father who, ever since the fall of Man, had yearned that these, His alienated children, might again be one with Him.

In the interval mentioned, since that visit to Jerusalem, the good Joseph had passed away, and Jesus had doubtless been lovingly providing for the mother so dear to him, patiently pursuing, probably, Joseph's own work at the humble carpenter's bench. So likewise, as mentioned earlier, had the aged relatives of Mary, Zacharias and Elizabeth, long since gone to their rest, leaving these two at Nazareth the only survivors of those associated in that marvellous revelation of thirty years before, save one; there was one other—the infant Son so wondrously given that aged couple, for the express purpose, as foretold, of becoming the Messenger, the forerunner of that greater One to follow.

It had not been given the saintly parents to see this glorious promise fulfilled; but they had passed away, doubtless, in the blessed faith and assurance that the child thus given them would be duly prepared

for his great work. And so, truly, it proved; for now, as the time was at hand when Jesus should openly unfold His great purpose and mission, so, too, did this, His appointed Messenger, appear, called, as it were, from a life unknown, veiled in obscurity, to awaken the attention of a drowsy world through his eloquence as a great and fearless preacher.

Rarely, if ever, was his voice heard in the great city. It was out upon the banks of the river Jordan, flowing placidly not far from Jerusalem, that he appeared; and here it was, out under the blue sky of Heaven, that he spoke, and where, from all parts of the country round, the eager listeners flocked to hear him.

A strange and striking figure, truly, he must have presented to those self-indulgent dwellers of the city, by no means few among his audience. An unknown one, bearing simply the unpretentious name of John, claiming to be the disciple of none of the great teachers of the day, a graduate of none of the famed and learned schools; straight from the desert, indeed, where his home doubtless had been but a lonely tent, his food the chance products of the wilderness, and his robe a simple tunic woven of camel's hair. Yet he it was who thus suddenly appeared with his startling message, with kindling eye and thrilling voice, to cry daily: "Repent, repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!"

More and more widespread became the fame of the great preacher; and at last from the Sanhedrim or Church council of Jerusalem, there came forth a special delegation, sent purposely to inquire into the claims of the unknown one.

"Who art thou?" they asked eagerly; "Art thou He for whom the world has waited so long, Christ, the promised Messiah?"

With unequivocal promptness came the firm denial of any such claim.

"Who, then?" they asked again, "Art thou Elijah, he whom, it hath long been said, should some day appear again upon earth?"

"I am not," was the brief but decisive answer.

"Art thou, then, that 'Prophet,' of whom Moses spoke, declaring that he should be raised up from among his brethren?"

Again that unhesitating answer, "No."

And now, with irritated impatience, his questioners ask again, "Who art thou, then? Give us some answer that we may be able to give to them that sent us; what hast thou to say of thyself?"

In reply came the clear, unfaltering response, "I am the Voice, foretold long since by the prophets of God, 'the voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord; make straight the highway for our God; for the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it!'"

Startling, indeed, must the sublime answer have been, uttered thus under the clear vault of heaven; and an awed silence fell upon the listening multitude, while wondering and astonished, the messengers hastened back to the inquirers who had sent them.

Fearlessly the great preacher continued his work, fervently urging on all who came to hear Him the great need of repentance; the great need of a purer, holier life, if they would be partakers in the blessed opportunity soon to be given to man, the privilege of

becoming members of that Kingdom of Heaven soon to be revealed and established on earth.

It was an age of terrible sin and immorality; and as the various classes of men flocked to hear him, the self-righteous Pharisee, the hard, avaricious Publican, the rude, licentious soldier, to each and all, of whatever rank or calling, was his fervid appeal addressed, urging that they put away the life of sin and enter paths of righteousness and truth.

There were many who responded to that call, acknowledging their sins, and seeking repentance, and as many as came he baptized, there, in the river Jordan. Through the rite thus administered he became universally known as "John the Baptist."

But ever more clearly did he proclaim: "I indeed baptize you with water, unto repentance; but there cometh One after me who shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost; One whose shoe I am not worthy to unloose; One who must increase, while I must decrease."

IX.

The Great Proclamation.

MANY days had the great Preacher stood upon the banks of the river Jordan, preaching and baptizing. As fervently as ever rang his message through the land of Judea, but, as yet, without incident, till one day, near the hour of sunset—one of those beautiful Summer days of Palestine—as he still lifted his voice to the multitude gathered about him, suddenly he paused. With eyes fixed steadfastly for-

ward, his whole countenance illumined with deepening joy and fervid exultation, silently he gazed upon One now slowly approaching. A Stranger He was to those dwellers of the country about Jerusalem; a young man of countenance and mien gentle and unassuming, yet of bearing so calmly noble and majestic that the spectators could not wonder the attention of the speaker should have been attracted.

But what strange words were these the latter was now uttering, in the voice of some inward, constraining conviction:

"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!"

A *man* typified as a *lamb!* "The Lamb which should take away the sin of the world!" What could it mean?

Fully were they familiar with that act of sacrifice long witnessed at the Temple of God. Here, day by day, on the great altar, was the innocent lamb laid, its blood shed, and its flesh consumed, an offering to God; while fervently ascended the prayers of the assembled multitude, pleading that the innocent life and blood thus offered might be accepted in atonement for man's sin, in acknowledgement of man's just condemnation.

For fifteen hundred years had this typical atonement for sin been offered. All present were, therefore, familiar with the impressive idea of a lamb thus referred to. But that it should be applied to a *man*—one standing here among them! Strange, indeed, that fervid declaration; and, with increasing wonder, were all eyes fixed on the grave, yet beautiful, tender countenance now in their very midst.

Greater yet grew the interest; for slowly the unknown One approached, making His way quietly through the crowd, which as silently made way for Him, till now He stood before the Preacher, and asked to be baptized.

He whose very countenance bespoke a life of purity, within and without; He whose very presence was that of holiness and peace; He to ask for that which, in its very nature, was the outward symbol of repentance, a heart seeking to be reconciled with God! Every eye looked with surprise; but John, the great preacher of righteousness, as though astonished above all others, murmured in low tones of startled protest:

"I have need to be baptized of Thee; comest Thou to *me!*"

With a gentle dignity almost kingly in its tone, the answer came:

"Suffer it to be so now. Shall I not fulfil all righteousness, all that is required of man?"

Silently, but as one not conferring a benefit, obeying rather a command, the Baptist no longer demurred. And upon the bowed head before him glistened now the waters of Jordan, less pure than the Soul thus hallowing its earth-tainted stream.

But all was not ended. Suddenly, amid the hush that followed, and even as the unknown One lifted His eyes to the blue vault above, from those azure depths a snowy Dove was seen descending, swiftly, unerringly, till, like a spirit, it rested upon that One standing there; and, simultaneously, like a peal of musical thunder, from Heaven came the startling proclamation:

"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased!"

In the general wonder and amazement, many declared it but a distant voice of thunder echoing from the cloudless sky. Those nearer that One, above whom the mystic words seemed floating, hovering, could but hear, though they might not understand. With veneration, deepening to awe, they gazed upon Him, while the great Preacher only bowed his head, as one hearing but the conviction of his own heart confirmed.

Not longer did the Stranger linger. Quietly, silently, as He had come, so now He passed onward; and Jesus of Nazareth, for He it was, went on His way, none venturing to stay or follow Him.

As slowly He disappeared in the distance, once more the voice of the Baptist was heard, speaking as one in a dream, or in the fervent ecstacy of the prophets of old, as with deep emotion he proclaimed:

"This is He of whom I said: "After me cometh One who is preferred before me; and I knew Him not. But I saw the Spirit of God descending from Heaven like a Dove, and resting upon Him; and He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me: 'Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and resting, He it is who shall baptize with the Holy Ghost.' And I saw, and now bear witness that this is the Son of God!"

X.

A Conqueror Vanquished.

IN following the wonderful Life now opening more fully to view, the fact must be ever kept in mind that it was a two-fold Life, filling, as it were, a two-fold sphere—the human and the Divine. Therefore, in many of the incidents marking the life of Jesus, and the motives underlying them, may often be traced the separate, yet ever-blended, working of these two natures.

Thus it was that immediately after His Baptism, immediately after the Holy Spirit had so wonderfully descended upon Him, consecrating, or ordaining Him anew, as it were, to His great work, instead of entering at once upon His ministry to man, Jesus disappeared from the eyes so eagerly seeking Him, and, guided by that same Spirit, sought a secluded spot, where, for a time, He might secure perfect retirement with God.

And herein is seen readily the need of the human nature; for, being One with God, surely no retirement was needed to be ever with God. But it was the human nature, realizing now, in full, the great work which lay before it—the human mind, struggling, perhaps, with the deep thoughts now confronting it—which realized the need of this seclusion and uninterrupted communion with the Father in Heaven, in preparation for the work to which it was appointed. It was necessary that heart, mind and body should be fully prepared for the mission in which each must

share; and nothing could so well conduce to this end as a season of rigid discipline, wherein the human nature, gaining perfect mastery over all its human weaknesses and desires, for evermore should obey the voice of that higher nature, now demanding all its powers.

The spot chosen for this retirement was in the lonely wilderness skirting the land of Judea; and here it was, utterly alone, and beyond the sight of human habitation, that, for forty days and nights, Jesus remained apart. Rising superior even to the claims of food and rest, here, day by day, and night by night, did He give Himself to ceaseless prayer, pouring forth His soul in fervent communion with that One to whom, as every other human heart, He likewise could alone look for strength and guidance.

The long fast and vigil was ended, but it is easy to understand how weakened the worn body had become, how fully awakened to its human needs; yet it was just at this hour of extremest bodily weakness, as is so often repeated in every human history, that Jesus, just as He was now to enter upon His great work for man, was called to face His own, and man's, greatest Enemy.

Long years before, this Enemy had met and conquered man, enticing him, through subtle words and subtler arts, from his high estate, evermore to wear the yoke of bondage. What if he could but conquer, now, man's Redeemer, this Son of God clothed in man's weak human nature, and thus frustrate, for all time, God's mighty purpose!

Approaching Jesus, therefore, in this lone wilderness spot and in this hour of weakness, man's

Tempter now drew near. Full well he knew the bodily hunger consuming, at this moment, the human frame, and not less he knew the divine power dwelling in closest union with that human need—the power which had but to speak to be obeyed; nevertheless, craftily, he assumed insidious doubt, and whispered:

"If Thou be really the Son of God, as Thou wilt have men believe, exercise now Thy power: command these stones about us to become bread, and thus satisfy Thy hunger."

The temptation was great to the human nature thus craving food, and to the impulse, common to every human heart, to substantiate its claims to truth and power. But not for the gratification of His human nature was that divine power to be exercised. Looking calmly upon the sneering one beside Him, calmly He answered:

"It is written, in the Word of God, man shall not seek sustenance and strength in bread alone, but in that communion with God which shall nourish and strengthen the soul."

Baffled for the time, but not daunted, the evil one looked, for a moment, from the lofty wilderness summit on which they stood. What if he might compass the destruction of that now frail human frame! Once more he whispered the half-jeering challenge:

"If that Word be so infallible to Thee, and Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself fearlessly to the rocks below; for it is also written: 'He shall give His angels charge concerning Thee; and in their hands they shall bear Thee up, lest at any time Thou dash Thy foot against a stone.'"

Surely life was not sweet to Jesus in this hour of

THE TEMPTATION.

human weakness and weariness. Behind Him lay, forever, the peaceful life of Nazareth; before Him the shadows which He alone could fathom. To the lonely, human heart, in its physical exhaustion, not untempting, for the instant, the thought of that one swift step, the one fleeting moment which should release Him forever from the mighty work, the anguish awaiting Him; but, waiving aside the cowardly suggestion, in the calm dignity of His nobler manhood, rebukingly He answered:

"Likewise, is it written there, 'Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.'"

This calm assumption, regardless of proffered proof, of His divinity, would have awed an assailant less bold; but, calling into play once more all his subtle power, again the latter returned to the combat. Full well he knew the loneliness and poverty attending the earthly position of Jesus—for, having now abandoned the humble village home, that He might give Himself more unreservedly to His great work, henceforth the Son of God claimed nothing to be called His own; full well, also, did the wily Tempter know the value of earthly power and wealth to one yearning to wield a mighty influence, to win the ear of a wealth-loving, a wealth-worshipping world.

Craftily leading Jesus, therefore, to a yet higher prominence, overlooking the whole city of Jerusalem, with its marble palaces, its burnished domes glittering in the sunlight, persuasively there fell upon the ear of the lowly, impoverished One a kingly offer.

It was at a time when the great city was all but wholly given over to sin, or distorted religion. Well,

therefore, could the Prince of Darkness claim it as his own. Hence, it was with all the assurance that the offer came: "All this will I give Thee, if Thou wilt but abandon Thy purpose, wilt but forsake God, and fall down and worship me."

Even so had the first man fallen. For the sake of earthly gratification had he severed the tie with the Father in Heaven to become the servant of his Tempter. Might not a similar victory be accomplished over this, man's Champion, seeking to retrieve that fall? The offer, surely, was great—in proportion to that Champion's greatness.

Readily Jesus discerned the deep design, and, turning now upon His adversary with all the scorn of a noble nature fully aroused, briefly He commanded:

"Get thee from Me, Satan! It is written, 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.'"

Baffled, foiled, the evil one fled before the fire of that holy wrath. Victorious, triumphant, but worn with the conflict, Jesus sank, His human nature spent and exhausted. But He, who is never nearer His earthly children than in such hours, sent now His own messengers to minister strength and nourishment such as earth is powerless to give.

XI.

As God and Man.

AS has been said, the period of which we write, was one in which, even among the chosen people of God, the true knowledge of His word and will had been sadly lost, so obscured and interwoven was

that word with man's perverted teachings, with rash interpretations revealing only the ignorance of men rather than the wisdom of God, that even the teachers of the day were but blind leaders of the blind. Thus were souls led away from, rather than to God, and even the very priests of His Church were fast yielding themselves to ignorance, and corruptness of life.

Nevertheless, there was a lofty claim of knowledge and wisdom among those who professed to be leaders of their age; and when therefore, a young, obscure man, now but thirty years of age, reared in one of the lowliest villages of one of the lowliest provinces of His country, and there known only as "the son of Joseph, the carpenter," that this lowly one should now present Himself as a Teacher, Guide, and Reformer among men, great indeed was the wonder, the scorn, and even the indignant rejection which He could but expect.

Yet as all this, and much more, Jesus of Nazareth was to offer Himself to His fellow men.

But if to none other was known the Divine Nature, and its marvellous power, clothed in that human form, Mary, His mother, certainly did; and yet, even to her, it was doubtless but a dim, only half comprehended mystery, which she could not have revealed, much less explained to others, had she tried. She knew that He was, in truth, in all respects human, even as she was—bone of her bone, and flesh of her flesh; but she was also fast realizing that she had but been permitted to bring into the world this Son of God that He might also be the Son of Man, a Son of the House of David, as so long since foretold by Israel's prophets.

The time was now at hand when she should also learn, that close and dear as had been the relation between them during all those early years, His great work was henceforth to claim Him; no longer might any one human heart twine its exclusive claims about Him; as the Friend, the Brother, the Saviour of all mankind, freely was He to give Himself to all; and even the mother, so dearly loved, was to be relinquished, with all other purely earthly ties, and henceforth to find in Him alone her Saviour and Redeemer.

It was thus that the lesson came to her, bringing with it wonder to many hearts about her.

Jesus had come forth from that long vigil in the lonely wilderness, strengthened and prepared for the work now awaiting Him; and seeking at once the open resorts of men, the river-bank where John still preached, the city and the road-side, already had He begun to attract attention. Already had He drawn about Him several young men, pure-hearted, earnest, men of about His own age, who feeling irresistibly drawn to this new Teacher whose life, like His words, was so pure and strong, had gladly united themselves to Him as pupils and followers.

It was with this little company, therefore, that Jesus was now frequently seen mingling freely with His fellow men; and being near the little town of Cana, a small city of His native province, Galilee, it happened that with these His friends, and His mother, He was asked to be present at a happy marriage feast, at the home, probably, of relatives of Mary.

It was evidently a lowly, unpretentious home; but, as usual, on such occasions, efforts had been made to render the gathering as enjoyable as possi-

ble; and also, as usual, one of the provisions, without which no feast, at that time was considered complete, was the pure grape wine, freely used in every household.

But as happened, on this occasion, whether through the assembly of a larger number than expected, or through some accident, the supply of wine was exhausted early in the entertainment, and neither means nor opportunity, perhaps, at hand, for procuring more.

It is not strange that a woman's heart, with all its instincts of household care, was quick to recognize the concern and embarassment such an emergency would occasion, under the circumstances; and the gentle heart of Mary of Nazareth, attending, probably, as friend and relative, to these minor details of the occasion, was troubled.

Anxiously she looked about her, and just at this moment, she beheld the Son she loved so well, and His little company of friends entering. Never had He failed to respond with ready sympathy to any perplexity or trouble oppressing her; and hastening to Him now, with a trust in His all-sufficient power, born of that inner knowledge which she alone possessed, she said impulsively:

"I am troubled for our friends, my Son; they have no wine!"

The impulse was kind, but unwise; thus in a crowded gathering to make common, as it were, a knowledge of Divine power revealed to her only, and not hers to reveal to others.

Moreover as has been said, the time had come when even this beloved One must learn that He,

whom, thus far, she had regarded as peculiarly her own, was henceforth to bear a different relationship to her. Already, perhaps, had Jesus endeavored, in private, to make this known to her; but, naturally, she was slow to learn the lesson; and now He felt compelled, once for all, to make clear, not only for her, but those about her, the great truth that not merely for the gratification of personal ends, nor passing interests, was the power within Him to be exercised; but in response to the need of helpless humanity, looking to a source higher than itself.

Turning, therefore, with something of rebuke in His tone, but by no means the harshness which the words in our time and construction would imply; perhaps, indeed, with a tinge of sadness which she alone could understand, He said impressively:

"Woman, what have I to do with thee; how is it that thou dost thus prematurely ask a revelation of Myself to men? The hour for that is not yet come."

Conscious, for a moment, perhaps, in her own heart, of her indiscretion, it is yet evident her trust both in His love and in His power was not in the least shaken; for seeking now the servants, quietly she said to them, directing their attention to Him she had just left, "Whatsoever He may command you, obey without questioning."

Nor was it long before the command came. Pointing to the six large water jars provided for the accommodation of the guests, Jesus said to the servants waiting near, "Fill them all afresh with water."

Wondering, doubtless, but pausing not to question, quickly they obeyed Him.

"Now," said He, with the same calm command

"Draw from them, and bear to the Master of the feast."

Again they obeyed; and lo, even as they drew, the liquid was no longer water, but ruddy, glowing *wine!*

No wonder that they started back, amazed, bewildered; but still questioning not, eagerly they hastened to the lately troubled Master of the feast, bearing the wine so wondrously provided. Nor did they at once reveal the secret; and wondering greatly, yet too much relieved to enquire closely, the Master could but credit the wise bridegroom with unusual foresight in thus, as he declared, reserving the best and richest wine for the closing festivities of the happy gathering.

Thus the incident passed, leaving its deepest impression only on the little band of disciples, who had witnessed the scene with inexpressible wonder; and thus, in answer to the lowly need of lowly hearts, had Jesus of Nazareth first manifested that two-fold Nature, revealing Him so truly God and Man. Man, in His ready sympathy with His fellow-man; God, in the infinite power to manifest that sympathy in greater than human help.

Quitting the little assembly thus blessed by His presence, and accompanied by the mother clinging to Him still, He bent His steps toward Capernaum, where Mary was now to take up her abode, the little home in Nazareth having been abandoned, doubtless, when the One most loved was called to go forth to His great work. And here it was that Jesus passed such time as His busy labors permitted, in the care and companionship of the mother so dear to Him; for it is Capernaum, not Nazareth, which we find mentioned later as "His own city."

XII.

Another Passover.

THUS openly and busily had Jesus begun His public ministry. His own pure life was, in itself, a lofty example to those about Him, sanctified, as we have seen, in the eyes of men, by holy Baptism, and conforming strictly to every ordinance commanded by God of His earthly children, He now began the greater work of lifting the soul of man above the mere outward observance of these ordinances to the higher spiritual life they were meant to teach, but from which human hearts had so sadly departed.

Mingling freely and kindly with His fellow-men, as evinced on the occasion of that happy marriage feast, yet it could but be that heart and mind should ever dwell on the one great end and purpose of His earthly life: the restoring of mankind to its lost estate as the children of God; the redemption of the world from the curse and bondage of sin, as only a Saviour alike human and divine, could do.

Therefore, day by day was it now His effort to prepare the hearts of those about Him for this great gift of salvation. Openly He taught, now on the broad road-side, the village green, in the synagogue, or the busy street, wherever He might be. And wherever He thus paused eager crowds gathered about Him, listening with wonder to One who, as they declared, spake as never man spake before.

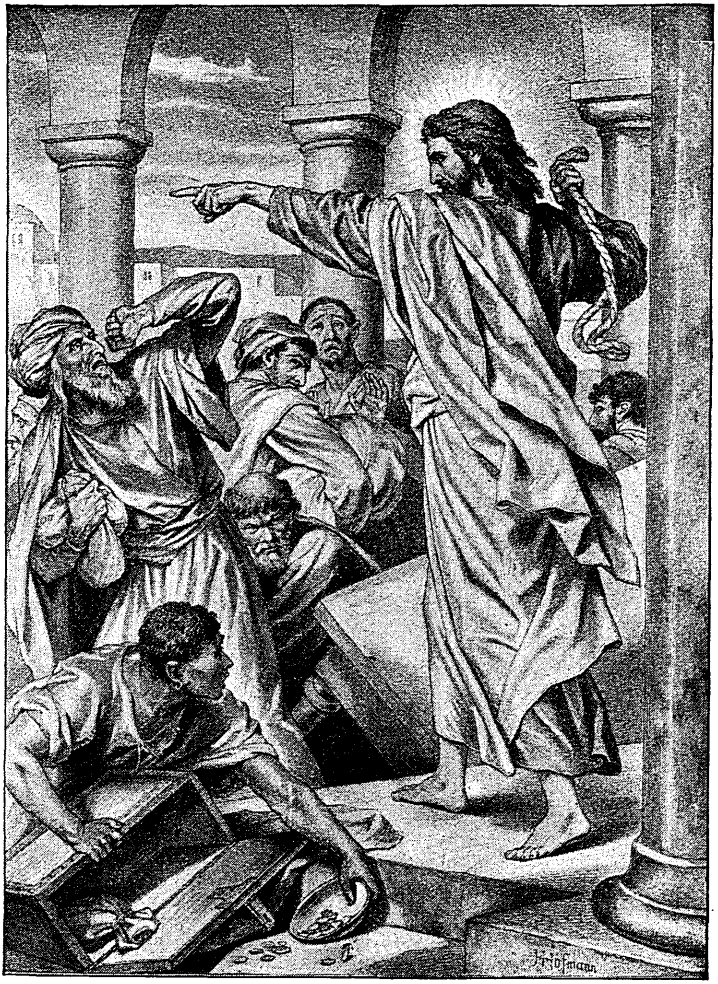
It was but a short time, however, after His visit to Cana, that once more Jesus bent His steps to Jeru-

salem, in attendance on the great Feast of the Passover. Conforming habitually, as has been said, to every requirement of the Church of God as then existing, it is probable that every year since that memorable visit, eighteen years before, had seen Him participating quietly, and unknown, in the grand worship offered outwardly at that season by so many, inwardly and reverently by so few.

It could but be, indeed, that with each successive visit the fervent heart of Jesus should note the growing indifference, the open irreverence too plain among the people proudly claiming the title of "the chosen race," an irreverence extending even to open desecration of the House of God, that sacred Temple, once so revered and so strictly guarded from sacrilege of any kind.

Among the practices now prevalent, and one which grieved and jarred upon Him most sorely, was the noisy, trafficing, heedless throng which, little by little, had come to appropriate the outer court, or wide pavement around the Temple, crowding almost the very doorway of the holy edifice, and disturbing with its rude din the peace and solemnity which should pervade every house of worship.

Here it was that all the requisites connected with the religious observances of the day were to be found, for sale or purchase. Large coops, containing pigeons and doves, in demand by the poorer classes, side by side with noisy pens filled with lambs, sheep and oxen, all destined for sacrificial use, the offerings for sin, as required in that sin-darkened age, before the true Lamb of God had come, or revealed Himself, as the one perfect and all-sufficient sacrifice for the sin of the world.



CLEANSING THE TEMPLE.

Here it was, also, that the bankers or brokers, as they would now be called, sat at their table-like counters strewn with piles of gold or silver coins, ready to exchange them for the foreign money brought to Jerusalem; for the strangers gathered there at this time from all parts of the world were required to have their money changed to the currency common to the city.

It is not difficult, therefore, to picture the busy scene, with its accompanying noise and confusion, never so active as at this very season, the holiest and most solemn of the year. The restless chirping and fluttering of the birds, the piteous bleating of the lambs, the deeper-toned lowing of the bullocks and oxen, and rising above all, the shrill voices of men haggling over their purchases, or clamoring for attention at the tables of the money changers.

And all this at the very door of that House of which, long before, it had been declared, "the Lord is in His holy Temple; let all the earth keep silence before Him."

It is not strange that the heart of Jesus, the Son of God, should have been moved to holy indignation as, year by year, He looked upon a scene so irreverent and unseemly! Who can doubt that often had He been moved to manifest that anger, and disperse the rude assembly? But the time had not come. Not till now was Jesus openly to assume among men that place which even now they would be slow to comprehend or acknowledge.

But having begun His great work, one of its first acts should be to reprove the irreverence and disobedience thus offered His Father in Heaven. Therefore,

at this very first Passover of His public ministry, did the young Prophet of Nâzareth, as already He was called, fearlessly enter upon one of the bravest acts ever attempted by a young and unknown reformer.

Entering the Temple court alone, or attended only by the little band of disciples already mentioned, swiftly He cast one sweeping glance upon the noisy, sacrilegious crowd. Then, like a King moved to consuming wrath, He strode into the thick of the astonished throng, and emphasizing His words with a scourge made hastily of rope lying near, in a voice that thrilled every ear, He cried:

"Take these things hence! How is it that ye dare make of My Father's House an house of mĕrchandise, a market-place of sale and barter!"

A moment only did the bewildered assembly hesitate. Enforcing still His command with the uplifted scourge, imperatively He drove them forth, overturning, in His righteous anger, the tables of the money changers, releasing the startled doves, the bleating lambs and oxen, driving all before Him, while awed, bewildered and cowering, the venders fled, daring neither to pause, to question, or resist.

Truly it had been a brave, fearless act. But now that quiet was restored, a little crowd which had looked on, taking no part in the scene, yet daring not to interfere, conscious, as they were, of the justice of the charge, approached the young reformer. Among them, doubtless, was the self-righteous Pharisee, the learned Scribe, and more than one Priest, conscience-stricken by the sacrilege thus openly reproved. But with haughty censure in their tones, and half sneeringly, they asked:

"Seeing that you take so much upon yourself, young Man, doubtless you boast some gift or power from Heaven, authorizing you thus to judge and rebuke your fellow-men. What sign or evidence can you show of this God-given power?"

Though fully aware that His words would not be understood, calmly Jesus answered:

"Destroy this Temple, if you will, and in three days I will raise it up."

With perfect truth might His words have applied to the stately edifice before them; for to the power now openly manifesting itself, nothing was difficult, nothing impossible. But, in reality, His thoughts were no longer fixed upon the passing incident, the narrow minds before Him. They were looking far beyond, to a day that would surely come, when, as He knew well, that earthly tabernacle or temple, in which His Spirit temporarily dwelt, a "temple" far more wonderful than that structure of stone, would indeed be destroyed, only to be raised again on the third day, unmarred by the malice assaulting it.

But the ignorant hearts around Him were alike amazed and indignant at the astounding answer so calmly uttered, and now cried scornfully:

"Are you so ignorant as not to know that forty and six years were required in the building of this Temple. Yet you would rebuild it in *three days?*"

Deigning no reply, knowing full well that to those who cared to cherish or remember them, time would reveal the meaning of His words, Jesus turned quietly away. Into the now silent House of Prayer He passed, where heart and mind, disturbed by the rude

contact with coarser natures, might find serenity in its peaceful communings.

The time had come, however, when active, busy service must follow upon those years of prayerful meditation, which had been but a preparation for the present. And the days now ensuing, rich in the opportunities of the crowded city, were busy days to Jesus, wherein His impressive preaching, and yet more, His now frequent miracles, won for Him the attention and the eager, questioning attendance of multitudes that sought Him.

XIII.

First Revelation of the Great Truth.

THUS Jesus worked and taught more and more freely among His fellow-men; but not yet did He openly proclaim Himself the long-expected Messiah.

It was His will that the hearts of those about Him should be drawn to Him more through trusting faith and love, than through the expectations connected with His great Office.

And very evident it was that many hearts were thus seeking Him, some drawn by His gentleness and ever ready compassion; others by the wonderful wisdom which continued to astonish all who heard Him. Nevertheless, there were those who, though thus feeling the influence of His words and works, yet dared not too readily recognize, nor even countenance, this hitherto unkown Teacher, Prophet, or Rabbi, as he was variously called, reared in that lowliest of Galilean towns, the obscure Nazareth, from which never yet had been foretold anything great or good to come.

Yet, as has been said, many were the hearts and minds already responding to the influence of His unanswerable words, the marvellous works which drew about Him an ever increasing crowd of the sick, the suffering, and the needy of every class. Many of the priests and learned men of Jerusalem began to enquire more closely of the young Reformer, but it was secretly, lest they should be ridiculed or scorned, as followers of the lowly Nazarene.

Thus it happened that one quiet night, when Jesus had finished His busy labors of the day, there came to Him one who had not the courage to seek Him by day, yet who desired earnestly to learn more of this unknown Teacher.

Jesus had no difficulty in recognizing His visitor. It was none other than a wealthy Pharisee and ruler of the Jews, by the name of Nicodemus. He it was who thus sought the lowly Jesus by night, and addressing Him with unfeigned deference, said earnestly:

"Rabbi"—the title given to all devout teachers of the Scriptures—"Rabbi, we can no longer doubt that You are a teacher come from God, for no man could do the miracles that You do, unless God were with Him. I would learn more of You and Your doctrine."

Without a moment's hesitation Jesus answered in words which must greatly have astonished one who, quite confident in his own self-righteousness, in his birthright as one of the chosen race, never doubted he already held a high place in God's Kingdom. As though reading the thoughts of the heart before Him, yet as if speaking to one who had every thing to learn of that higher life, Jesus answered slowly and impressively: "Verily and truly, I say to you, unless

a man be born again he can never even see the Kingdom of God."

Nicodemus was bewildered by the unexpected answer. "Born again," he repeated, "why, Master, how could such a thing be? How can a man who is old become a little child, as it were, and be born again?"

"Ah," said Jesus, speaking more plainly, "the birth that you speak of is the birth which is common to all human beings; the birth of which I speak is that which can be given by God's holy Spirit alone, and which can, therefore, alone make man like unto God. For he who is born of the Spirit of God will be like unto God; he who is born only of man can have only the nature and life of man. Therefore," he continued, "why should you marvel when I tell you that a man must, indeed, be born anew, if he would be truly the child of God; born anew of water and the Spirit, as henceforth revealed and ordained of God."

Nevertheless, all this was, indeed, strange and surprising to this proud Jew, so well content, heretofore, with his own ideas of holiness and truth. He could not understand that God was now to make a new covenant with man, and to offer a new and far closer life with Him than had been possible heretofore, a life which this, the Saviour and Redeemer of man, had now come to reveal. In growing wonder, therefore, he could only repeat again, "How can these things be?"

Difficult, indeed, it was to make such deep truths clear to a mind so steeped in ignorance and self-satisfaction. But patiently did Jesus seek to unfold the precious tidings He had come to bring, telling of God's

infinite love toward man, a love so deep and strong that He had now sent this, His own beloved Son, into the world, that all who would believe and trust in Him might be saved from sin, and have everlasting life.

Furthermore, He now revealed the first glimmering of a great event to come, which time alone should make fully clear, and to which wonderingly, indeed, must Nicodemus have listened.

"You remember," said Jesus, "that thrilling incident in the history of God's people, long ago, when, having sinned grievously, thousands lay upon the desert plain, perishing from the sting of a venomous serpent. You remember also how, in obedience to God's command, Moses lifted up among them the image of a serpent, made of gleaming brass, that it might be seen afar; and all who looked up to it, in faith, even though dying, were saved.

"Even so," He continued, "must the Son of God, likewise son of Man, be lifted up among the perishing souls dying under the curse of sin, and all who will, in faith, look up to Him shall likewise be saved."

Strange, indeed, must such revelations have seemed to this truth-seeking visitor who had thus sought the great Teacher by night; and when at last he again stole away in the darkness, he bore in his heart the first gleams of that light which, later, should illumine not only his own soul, but the whole sin-darkened world.

Nor was this the only one to whom Jesus thus quietly, not as One seeking notoriety, revealed Himself in this early stage of His work. It was but a short time after this interview with Nicodemus that

He left the crowded city, and going forth into the country of Judea He drew near the city of Samaria. Here, to one very different in wordly position to the rich Pharisee, yet who listened as eagerly as he, and with far more eagerness to share with others the wondrous tidings, did Jesus reveal His mission.

It was beside the shaded city well, a short distance only from the gate, that Jesus paused one day to rest, His disciples being absent on some brief errand. Thoughtfully He sat, looking upon the beautiful landscape, rich in its Summer verdure, when a woman approached, bearing her pitcher to draw water from the well.

As was well known, at this time, as indeed for hundreds of years past, feelings of bitter enmity existed between the Jews and the people of Samaria. So bitter, in fact, that neither would have received from the other, knowingly, either food or drink. Having quickly recognized the Stranger resting beside the well as a Jew, the woman, therefore, took no further notice of Him, nor would have spoken, probably, but that as she drew the bucket from the cool depths below, suddenly He asked for a drink of the refreshing water. Quickly her dark eyes were raised to His, and astonishment rather than discourtesy, drew from her the wondering query, "How is it, thou a Jew, and yet asking drink of me, a woman of Samaria?"

The opportunity was not one to be lost; and in return, perhaps, for that "cup of cold water," Jesus gave freely to this thirsty, perishing soul, that "water of life," springing only from the depths of His own measureless love; a love recognizing no enmity which

should estrange the children of God, no variance which should blind their eyes to the one All-Father.

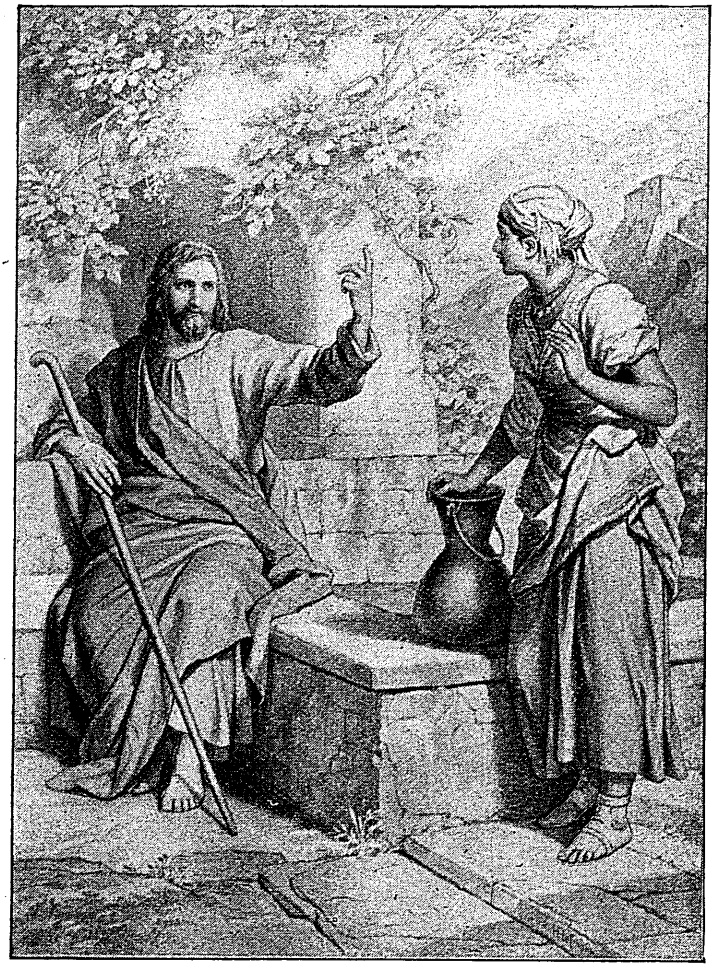
In deepening wonder the woman listened to the marvellous words uttered by this Stranger of countenance so pure and holy, and plainly, unreservedly, at last, did He make Himself known to her as none other than the Messiah, the long-looked-for Christ, the Saviour. Furthermore, in order to strengthen the germ of faith, struggling still with doubt and fear, calmly He laid bare to her her whole past and and sinful life, lying open to His omniscient eye like the page of an open book; yet none the less tenderly did He tell her of God's love, and His yearning for souls that would turn unto Him and be saved.

Trembling with wonder, but also with joy and hope, eagerly His listener hastened away, forgetting even the errand which had led her to the spot, longing only to bring others to Him she had found.

"Come!" she cried to her wondering towns-people, "Only come and see One to whom I will take you; One so wise that He has told me all I have ever done; yet so gentle and kind that He tells me also of hope and pardon! Is not this, indeed, the Christ?"

Gladly they came. And now to them, even as to her who brought them, did Jesus as freely give of that water of Life, the glad tidings of God's yearning love, His priceless gift of salvation.

With throbbing hearts they listened; and when at last He rose to continue His journey, beseechingly they begged Him to remain yet longer with them, declaring to her who had called them:



AT THE WELL IN SAMARIA.

"Now do we, too, believe on Him; not because of that which thou hast told us, but in that we ourselves have heard Him; and we know that this is, indeed, the CHRIST, the Saviour of the world!"

XIV.

THE TRUTH MADE KNOWN.

FOR two days did Jesus remain in and about Samaria, where those who heard Him had so gladly believed on Him. In fact, wherever He now bent His steps, crowds thronged about Him, drawn by the rumors that had gone abroad, spread by the many who had seen and heard Him during those Passover days in Jerusalem.

As He once more entered His own province of Galilee, therefore, He was hailed with delight on all sides; and, coming again to the town of Cana, where He had so wonderfully converted the water into wine, an incident occurred which showed that it was no longer only the poor and lowly who sought His aid.

The city of Capernaum was about twenty miles south of Cana; and, when it was learned that Jesus was at this latter place, there came hurrying to Him, one day, all the way from Capernaum, a high-born nobleman of that city, who, pressing his way through the crowd, fell at the feet of Jesus, crying imploringly:

"O, Sir, come down with me to Capernaum, for my son is ill, and is even now at the point of death!"

Jesus looked at him for a moment, sadly, and then, as though speaking His own thoughts aloud, He said:

"Is it only for the miracles I do that they seek Me; will they never believe on Me except I show them signs and wonders?"

But the distressed father, looking beseechingly into His face, and seeing the apparent hesitation, cried again the more fervently:

"Sir, come down with me, I implore You, or my child will die!"

And, touched with compassion, as He ever was by the cry of sorrow, Jesus answered promptly, and without the delay of accompanying the anxious suppliant:

"Go on your way; your son shall live."

It was a most comforting answer, but it was, also, a test of faith. With a still anxious heart, doubtless, but trusting the word of the great Physician, the father turned away, to retrace his homeward journey; and, even as he drew near the city, several of his servants came hurrying to meet him, with the good news that a wonderful change for the better had come, and the sick child was already fast improving.

"At what hour did he thus begin to mend?" asked the father, eagerly.

"Yesterday, at about one o'clock, the fever left him," was the prompt answer.

Instantly was the father's heart filled with joy and wonder. Was it not at this very hour that Jesus had uttered those calm words: "Go your way; your son shall live!" Surely, it is not strange that, under such convincing evidence of love and power, the nobleman and all his household believed in this all-wise and merciful Saviour thus making Himself known to men.

For several months Jesus remained in and about the Province of Galilee, carrying His blessed ministry from town to town. But the time came when another great religious observance drew Him again to the city of Jerusalem; and, as He and His disciples entered the city by one of the gateways known as the "Sheep Gate," His attention was attracted toward a certain pool of water which was an object of special interest to all the country around. Such water resorts are not unknown now, for they are found in various places; a pool, or reservoir, which through some hidden spring, or underground current, is replenished afresh at intervals, agitating the surface of the water, and offering, as often known, at such times, peculiar medicinal properties, valued for the healing of various maladies. So impressed were the people of Jerusalem with the virtues of the spring in question—the "Pool of Bethesda," as it was called—that it was believed none less than an angel of God came at such times to "move the water" and bestow its healing gifts.

Thus had it come about that around the pool a number of balconies, or open porches, had been placed, whereon the sick and afflicted lay, all the day long, patiently waiting till the pool should stir under that unseen touch, when, with trembling haste, they pushed forward, or kind friends lifted them into the healing waters.

It was on this scene that the pitying eye of Jesus fell, as He entered the city, and upon one sad sufferer in particular. It was truly a piteous case. On a miserable pallet, stretched on one of the porches, lay one who, for thirty-eight long years, had been a helpless paralytic, or cripple; and now, for a weary time,

had he lain here, beside the famous pool, hoping that he, too, might be one of those blessed by its health-restoring touch.

Doubtless the pitiful story was written legibly on the worn, despairing countenance, for it seems to have appealed at once to the compassionate heart of Jesus; and, pausing beside the sufferer—lying, probably near His path—He said, gently:

"Are you waiting here to be healed, my friend?"

The poor man turned his wistful, patient face toward the unknown One, and answered sadly:

"O, Sir, I have waited long; but I have no one to lift me into the pool when the waters move, and, while trying to reach it myself, others are sure to step in before me."

In a voice of quiet command, falling on the invalid's ear with strange and thrilling power, Jesus spoke the simple words, "Arise, take up thy bed, and go thy way."

Bewildered, and scarce believing, yet impelled by some strong, inward trust, the sufferer obeyed. Slowly he rose to his feet, and, wonderful as it seems, the helplessness of all those weary years fell from him as a cast-off garment. He stood on his feet rejoicing!

Now, as it happened, it was the Sabbath Day on which Jesus had wrought this wonderful act of love and mercy; that day, which, instead of being, as is Sunday now, a happy day of joyous service to God and man, was, at that time, made hard and wearisome by rigid laws and customs, so strict that a very slight breach of them was often made the sentence of death. But they were laws made by man, not God;

and He who had now come to teach all truth was not afraid to show mankind what was pleasing to His Father in this, as in all else.

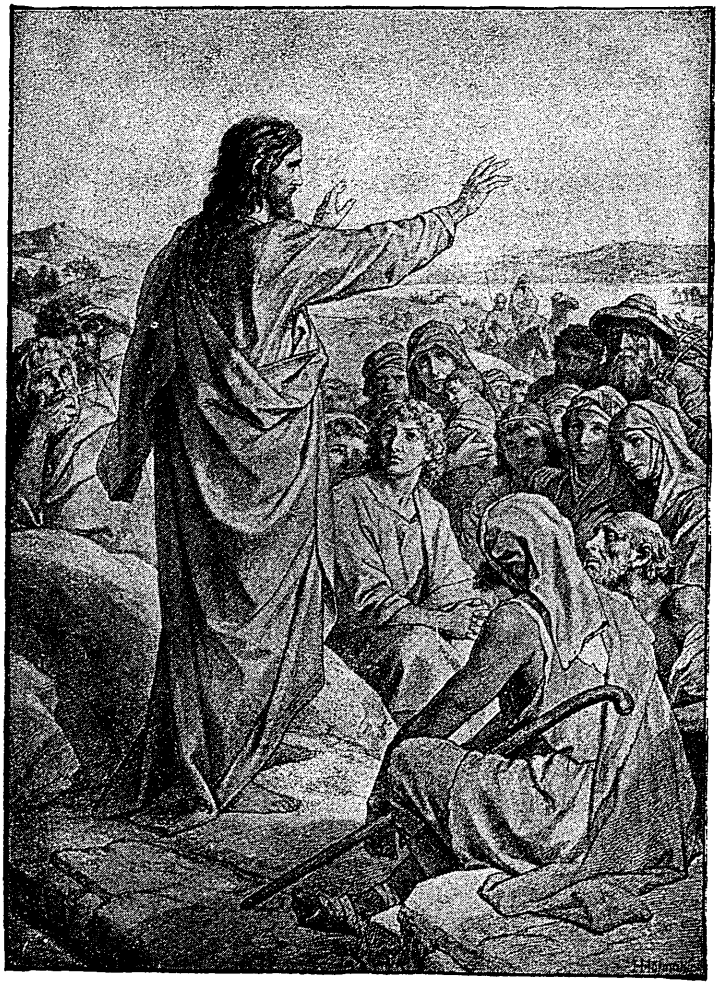
Nevertheless, half through respect for these rigid rules, and half through the jealous anger awakening more and more toward the young Reformer and Teacher of Galilee, the priests and rulers of the people seized now upon this act as a pretext for an open charge against Him.

From mouth to mouth passed the angry murmur, "A desecrator of the Sabbath! A transgressor of God's holiest law!" And soon a fierce crowd gathered about Jesus, and so vehement became the indignation, that nothing less than speedy death was threatened.

But calmly, unflinchingly, He faced the storm. Just as, a short time previously, He had so fearlessly maintained the sanctity of His Father's House, so now, He who had but just shown Himself the tenderest and gentlest of men, proved Himself equally fearless and brave, when occasion required.

And now, for the first time, in this great city of God's chosen people, openly and clearly did Jesus declare Who and What He was; none other than the Son of God come into the world to accomplish that work which God as His Father had sent Him to do. Earnestly, tenderly, He told them of that Father and His longing that all men should come unto Him and be saved, and then proclaimed:

"And verily, truly, I say unto you, he that will hear My words and believe on Me shall have everlasting life; for the hour will come, and indeed is already come, when even the dead shall hear My voice,



SPEAKING TO THE MULTITUDE.

the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath the power of life in Himself, so has He given that power to Me, His Son, that I may give life to others.

"Search the Scriptures," He continued fervently, "for you believe in them; and it is the Scriptures that tell of Me, for I am He of whom Moses and all the prophets wrote. But if you will not believe their writings, how can you believe on Me? Truly, I am come unto you, in My Father's Name, but you will not receive Me."

Awed by these words of solemn declaration, yet, even as He said, unwilling to give Him either their love or faith, slowly the crowd dispersed, and Jesus went on His way, sorrowing, doubtless, over the obdurate hearts so coldly thus rejecting Him.

XV.

"He Came Unto His Own, and His Own Received Him Not."

SAVING now thus declared Himself openly, both by His words and His miracles, and made His great mission known, Jesus once more went forth from the city of Jerusalem, to carry the glad tidings of salvation to all who would receive Him. And, naturally, His heart and thoughts, alike, turned to that home of His childhood and youth, the little town of Nazareth.

Often, doubtless, during those earlier days, had He pictured this time to come, when, as their truest Friend and Saviour, He should make Himself known to the hearts about Him. But alas, were it not that

these, and all other hearts were so well known to Him, what pain and disappointment had been His, in this home He had loved so well!

It was the peaceful Sabbath Day, as He entered the town; and making His way direct to the well-remembered Synagogue on the hill, where so often in days gone by, He had listened to the Word of God, He now entered, and with quiet dignity, took His place among the teachers and learners. Already were the people assembled for worship, and as Jesus thus took His place among them, no surprise was felt, for already had they heard many rumors of His wonderful wisdom and power; and rejoiced to see Him thus among them. A copy of the Scriptures was therefore at once handed Him, that He might read and expound the lesson appointed for the day, in the Hebrew liturgy.

Every eye and ear was bent upon the young preacher with eager interest, many recalling, probably, the pure, beautiful Boyhood passed among them. What would He have to say to them, now, as a Teacher, or expounder of the Scriptures?

Every word in the Book He held was familiar to them, for it was their much loved Prophet, Isaiah; but as He began the passage selected, in His wondrously beautiful, impressive voice, each word seemed throbbing with a life and power never felt before:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind; to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

Closing the Book, Jesus sat down, as was the custom in that day, when delivering a sermon or instruction; and forthwith, in His own direct, unhesitating way, He began His discourse with words that must have thrilled every listener.

Long had the passage just read, been accepted, and revered, as referring to that promised One for whom the world was waiting; that One who some day, should come as man's Deliverer, Christ, the Messiah, the Anointed; anointed, even as the prophet had said, to minister to the poor, the afflicted, and the sin-fettered captive.

With what thrilling effect, therefore, must the words next uttered have fallen upon the listening crowd, as clearly, distinctly, the calm, majestic One before them, in unfaltering tones, proclaimed:

"This day is this Scripture fulfilled among you!"

And taking no heed of the astonished glances directed towards Him, calmly Jesus proceeded to unfold to them, even as He had to others, the message of salvation now offered to man.

For a time, they were entranced by the power and beauty of that message. But as He continued, disclosing more and more, His glorious mission, and likewise bringing fearlessly before them their need of a Saviour, a Deliverer from sin, slowly there spread through the audience a feeling of angry surprise and resentment.

Was not this Jesus, the well remembered Son of Joseph the carpenter,—raised here, in their very midst? and He, now, to proclaim Himself the SON OF GOD, the Saviour of man, returning thus to con-

vince His fellow-townsmen of the sins of which, indeed, they were only too well conscious!

No wonder they found it difficult to realize the wonderful revelation. At last their indignation passed all bounds. Mutterings of rude dissent, deepening to sharp antagonism began to be heard within the crowd. A timid speaker would doubtless, have been disconcerted, if not affrighted at the gathering storm. But Jesus, brave as he was earnest, was not for a moment appalled, nor did He falter in the message He had come to deliver.

"It is well-known," He said, "no prophet is honored or accepted in his own country; nevertheless I have thus come to you, even as to all, bringing the blessed offer of salvation. It is for you to accept or reject it, as you will."

The displeasure of the listeners now rose to fierce and angry denunciations.

"Cast Him out!" was the cry on every side. "Put Him forth! The imposter—the blasphemer!"

And with increasing fury, rudely they closed about Him, thrust Him from the synagogue, and amid all the peace of that Sabbath day, the hooting crowd hurried Him through the streets to the brow of one of those very hills, from which so often He had looked in the days of His boyhood; and here they would have hurled Him down the rugged precipice which yawned below!

But the time had not yet come when the Saviour of the world should indeed lay down His life for those He sought to save. Unresistingly He permitted them to vent their fierce wrath thus far, but no farther. And now, with a silent exercise of the divine power

within Him, calmly He set at nought that crowd half blind with rage, and before they were well aware, had quietly passed from among them, and was lost to view amid the winding paths of the hills of Nazareth.

Passing on, He turned His steps once more to Capernaum, where His mother now dwelt; and here He tarried many days, pursuing His blessed work, undaunted and unmoved by the shameful rejection suffered at the hands of His own countrymen. Truly He had come unto His own, but they had received Him not; henceforth, they must seek Him if they would share the priceless gift He bore.

In Capernaum, most gladly did eager hearts crowd about Him, listening with joy to the gracious words He spoke, and watching with unceasing wonder His marvellous works. Daily they came to Him, and daily He healed the sick, the blind, the lame, and afflicted of every kind; cleansing that most terrible of all diseases—incurable leprosy—casting out the evil spirits which, in that day, laying hold upon frail human beings, seemed to take possession of mind, body and soul, and worked untold suffering.

And strange to say, it was these evil spirits which, from the first, seemed to recognize Jesus as truly the Son of God, and were among the first so to proclaim Him.

"Let us alone," they cried, when brought before Him, by the friends of some sufferer seeking the aid of the Great Physician; "leave us to torment and distress mankind, as we so long have done. What have we to do with Thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth! Art Thou come to destroy us? We know Thee who Thou art, the holy One of God."

But in every instance Jesus rebuked the evil spirit, commanding them in tones they dared not disobey, to release the unhappy ones so grievously tormented; and never did He speak in vain.

Is it strange that all hearts wondered, asking one of another, "Who can this be? For with power and authority He speaks to the spirits of evil, those enemies of man which none has had power to subdue, and they obey Him!"

Nor is it strange that from all parts of the country eager ones came, bringing their sick and afflicted; ever more closely they thronged about Him from early morning till close of day, and fervently they prayed Him not to leave them, but remain with them always.

Gently He put aside their loving entreaties; there were other sheep of the fold awaiting His care, and to these, too, must He carry the glad tidings of salvation.

XVI.

The Kingdom of God.

THUS it was that Jesus passed on His way, from city to city, preaching in the synagogue, in the street, on the road-side, or sometimes out upon the grassy hill-slopes reaching down to the beautiful lake or sea of Gennesaret. Here it was, probably, on one of these very hill-sides, or mountain slopes, that there fell from His lips one of the grandest, sweetest discourses that ever gladdened human ears; words still thrilling the hearts of men, and remembered as "The Sermon on the Mount."

It must have been a beautiful scene. The blue lake rippling at His feet, the lofty mountains rising in the background, and He, the young Prophet of Nazareth, gathering His flock, like a shepherd, here under the dome of heaven, to pour into their ears words of hope, of cheer, and comfort. They were all about Him, the poor, the sorrowing, the downcast and lowly; hungry souls yearning for the bread of life; the pure in heart longing for a closer walk with God; and for each and all there was a message, a message telling of hope, of joy and peace to come.

No wonder that the listeners hung upon the beautiful words thus uttered as upon truth never heard before, revealing to them their Father in heaven as they could never have known Him, approached only in that empty worship of forms and ceremonies in which alone He was now sought of men.

But, on the other hand, there were also envious, malicious, jealous ears listening to the Prophet of Nazareth, and self-convicted by the truths which He uttered, the fearless denunciations of the pride and hypocrisy of which they were only too conscious, in themselves, the more and more bitterly did their anger rise against Him. Boldly did He declare the utter worthlessness of that service which, though outwardly offered to God, had its real motive in seeking the praise of men; the gifts and offerings presented only when seen of men; the ostentatious fasting practiced only that others might extol the pale, disfigured countenance; the long, unheartfelt prayers uttered frequently aloud on the street corners for the ears of men, evidently, rather than the ear of God. All these hypocritical, yet common practices of the

day did Jesus fearlessly denounce in sternest disapproval; and then, in accents indescribably sweet, He said:

"Think not that God would be thus sought as though He were afar off, and to be reached only through vain words and useless repetitions; for is He not your Father, and are not all your needs known to Him, even before you ask? Therefore, when you would draw near to Him, seek out some quiet spot, some closet apart and there pour forth your heart in this wise: 'Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; for Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.'"

This was the form of prayer which Jesus taught His flock as most acceptable to that Father whom He so longed to make known to them; and having thus taught them in that prayer to pray for the coming of God's kingdom upon earth, He proceeded to show them more plainly what this kingdom should be.

Heretofore the Covenant, the promises, the Church of God had, as before said, been confined to one small portion of the great human family, God's chosen people, the Israelites or Jews. But this was no longer to be. In the first place, they had proven unworthy of the great trust and blessing bestowed upon them, forsaking the pure law of God for self-made customs of man, and relying upon their favored position more

than upon any true righteousness for entrance upon the kingdom of heaven. Furthermore, the time had now come, as so long foretold, when God would seek out and gather to His heart all mankind through that Saviour who should redeem them from sin, and bring them back to their Father in heaven. Therefore, no longer was the heavenly message, the precious offer of love and salvation, to be confined only to the proud Jewish race; it was to reach out to all people and nations, a vast and glorious kingdom established here upon earth, of which Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Saviour of man, should be the Head and Ruler.

This was the new and wondrous truth which Jesus had come to declare; which He was ever teaching, not only in plain words, but also in brief, impressive stories, or parables, bringing such truths more vividly before His hearers under some familiar illustration.

"To what shall we liken this kingdom of God?" He cried, "or to what shall we compare it? It is like a grain of mustard seed, which though the smallest of all seeds, when sown in the earth, yet when it is grown up, is the largest of all herbs, shooting out great branches, so large that all the birds of the air may find rest and shelter under its shadow."

"Again," He said, "the kingdom of heaven is like a great net cast into the sea, gathering fish of every kind; all to be drawn, alike, to Him, upon the shore, and there to be divided by Him alone, the good from the evil."

With these and many similar parables did Jesus tell abroad the glad tidings of salvation, and its far-

reaching offer to all mankind. But, glorious as the message was, it may easily be imagined with what displeasure it fell upon the ears of many of those proud, self-righteous Jews. Bitterly they resented the thought of any save their own nation as the called of God; and, such was their growing indignation, that openly they denounced and derided the Teacher of these new doctrines, and secretly plotted how they might banish, or even destroy Him.

Nevertheless, all the more eagerly did enthusiastic crowds hang upon His words and throng His footsteps. Moreover, wherever He now went, He was accompanied by a little band of faithful disciples, which could but attract attention both through their number and their zealous devotion. For to that little group of four, first chosen in the beginning of His ministry, Jesus had now added eight others, making a band of twelve trusty friends and companions, chosen from among all those who followed Him, that they might serve later as witnesses of all that He said and did; and, not merely this, but that they might be fitted, by careful instruction, for the charge of that work He was now establishing, when He should have returned to His home in Heaven.

They were, therefore, continually with Him, privileged as none others to witness the wonders of His work; a little company, varying much in individual character, yet all alike, apparently, devoted followers of Him they now so gladly acknowledged their Lord and Master. Various, also, had been their work and callings; but each and all drawn alike from the class of faithful, earnest workingmen; chosen, as it seemed, with a purpose by Him whose mission it was to lend

beauty and dignity to every duty of life and labor, and who, from the first, had sought His home and His friends among the plain and lowly.

Thus, several of the band were sturdy fishermen, plying their honest trade on the lakes of Galilee; but gladly they cast aside their nets to follow Him, who promised to make them fishers of men, and whose voice so strangely drew them. Notable among these were the four young men first mentioned, Andrew, and his brother, Simon, to whom Jesus added the name of Petras, or Peter; and James and John, likewise brothers, and all from neighboring towns on the coast of Galilee. From the first, these four, but especially Peter, James, and John, were the closest friends and companions of Jesus, John, in time, winning the beautiful appellation of "The Disciple whom Jesus loved." To these were added their fellow-countryman, Philip, and his pure-hearted friend, Nathaniel, known later, it is believed, under the name of Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew; another James, and another Simon; Lebbæus Thaddæus; and one, who though doubtless pure of heart when chosen, later suffered himself to be led away by Satan, and his name becoming ever memorable as Judas Iscariot.

These were the twelve companions and pupils whom Jesus drew about Him, that they might be His special messengers, later, and therefore, to be known as His Apostles. And for this reason it was that He kept them ever near Him, imbuing them more and more with His own spirit, and fitting them, as none others, for the great work which should some day be left in their charge.

XVII.

A Greater than Death.

STIRRING and impressive as had been the words of the young Prophet whose fame was now spreading daily, and marvellous as were already His works, there was yet to be a manifestation of power which should indeed convince all hearts that He was none other than He claimed—the Son of God, clothed with the power of God Himself.

Yet, as in all other revelations of this divine nature, the manifestation came quietly, unostentatiously, and with no effort to attract the attention of men.

It was one day, as with His chosen twelve, and the crowd as usual, following His footsteps, Jesus slowly ascended a winding path, traversing the hills of Galilee, and leading to the ancient city of Nain. It was a rugged, mountainous roadway, worn by the feet of many a traveller long since gone to his rest, and sleeping now, perhaps, in the rock-hewn sepulchres which marked the spot on either side. For this was the city's burying ground, here on the crest of the hill; and as though more noticeably calling attention to this fact, even now, as Jesus and His company approached, there was seen issuing from the gates of Nain, a funeral procession making its slow way toward them.

Evidently it was a funeral of more than usual sadness, perhaps of more than usual note; for it was attended by a large throng of citizens from whom loud and prolonged arose the bitter wail of sorrow.

Their grief was natural, for the mourner in their midst was a mother bemoaning in broken-hearted grief her son, her only son, and she a widow.

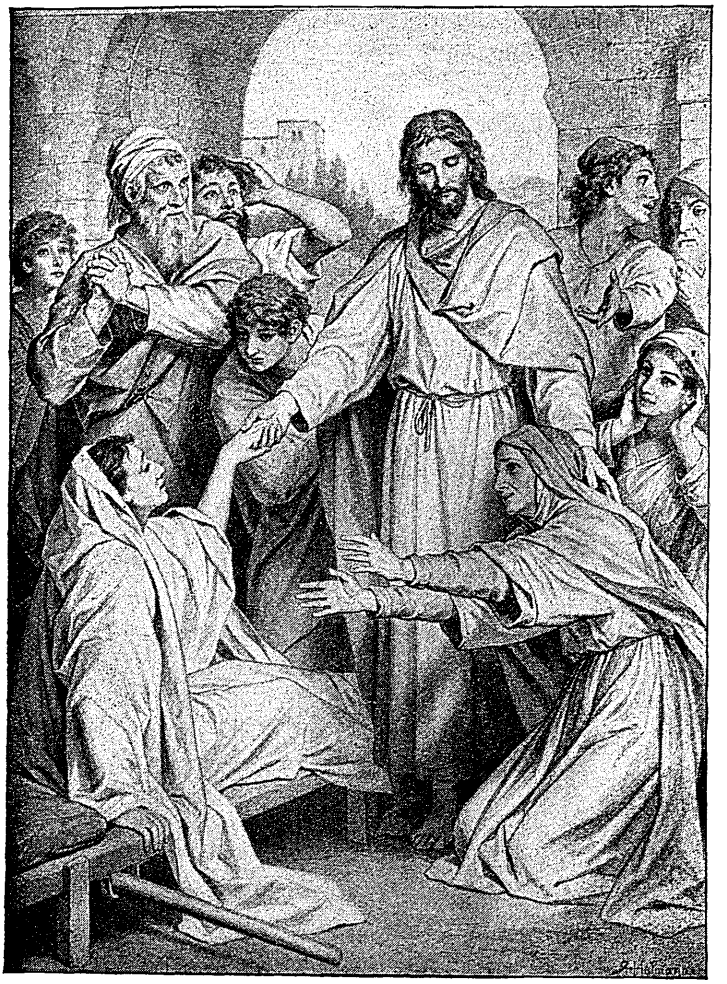
There had been none to communicate this sad circumstance to Jesus; yet no sooner did that wail of unutterable anguish fall upon His ear than the heart so quick to interpret every note of human woe, and so prompt to respond, was touched with compassion. He needed not to question. Making His way straight to that grief-stricken one, softly He whispered two words only; but ah! the tenderness, the sympathy, the power of those words as they fell from the lips that uttered them!

"Weep not," was the gentle command; and then, turning to those who bore the bier, whereon, according to the custom of the country, lay the lifeless form, enshrouded only in its burial clothes, in tones of strange authority, He bade the carriers pause.

Questioning not, hesitating perhaps, yet in speechless amazement, they obeyed, while all the throng wondered. What could it mean, this unseemly interruption of a funeral procession, this kingly tone and bearing? With throbbing heart and strained eyes, the mother gazed at the unknown One who had spoken those words of comfort, and now standing beside her, close to that bier containing all that she most loved on earth.

Not long was she left in suspense. Amid the silence deep and expectant, suddenly the voice of Jesus rose, calm and impressive, but thrilling in its tone, as laying His hand upon the cold, still form, commandingly He cried:

"Young man, I say unto thee, arise!"



"YOUNG MAN, I SAY UNTO THEE, ARISE!"

Instantly, beneath the very gaze of those wondering spectators, slowly the pale lids quivered a moment, then opened wide; a thrill of life passed through the stiffened form, awakening all its sleeping members; and lo! he that had been dead, sat up! One wondering gaze into the mother's eyes, one yearning movement of the tremulous arms, and he was folded to that mother's heart with an ecstasy which no words may seek to measure or describe.

But now the spell constraining that watching multitude was broken. Amazement, awe and bewilderment had kept them silent; but now, a murmur low and deep, and at first expressive only of wonder, began to stir that awakening throng; a murmur rising louder and louder, till it burst into a very shout of praise! In their midst but a moment since had stood the mighty monarch, Death. But here, likewise, in their midst stood One, a mightier still than Death! And far across the rugged hill side, and echoing amid those gloomy sepulchres, rolled the swelling shout of joy: "God has, indeed, remembered His people, and has raised up, as was promised, a mighty Prophet among us!"

XVIII.

A Mission Ended.

THROUGHOUT the land of Judea had the story of that wondrous restoration of the son of the widow of Nain spread; more and more the people marvelled, while more and more bitter became the animosity and hatred of the hardened hearts, unwilling to accept in this lowly Prophet of Nazareth, Israel's long-promised Messiah.

And, in fact, this had been the disappointment and bewilderment of many sincerely longing to see God's promise fulfilled, and great the Redeemer so long foretold. Notwithstanding the many prophecies depicting Him as meek and lowly, they had clung to the hope that the coming One would appear in great glory, and manifest His power so convincingly, that all the world should at once acknowledge His greatness, and Israel once more rejoice in an earthly King and Deliverer.

But Jesus was to establish His Kingdom on a far more enduring, and world-wide foundation than the little monarchy of Israel. Moreover, it was to be a Kingdom whose glory should not be in worldly pomp, nor its members attracted to it in the hope of earthly advancement. Those who sought its blessings must be drawn purely through faith and love toward that Father whose message was now reaching a perishing world, a message addressed, therefore, to all alike, but above all to the poor, the downcast, and to sin-laden souls.

This was indeed a hard lesson for the proud Jew, the self-satisfied Pharisee, the learned priests and Scribes; and bitterly they denounced this Jesus of Nazareth as a false Teacher and imposter, unceasingly strove to weaken His influence with the people, and craftily sought to entrap Him in some contradiction of Himself, or better still, ensnare Him into some word or act through which they might accuse Him to the civil authority.

Little did they yet know, however, the supreme wisdom, the infinite power of Him they sought to destroy with their weak human schemes. Over and over

again were they forced to retire before Him, discomfitted and baffled by His withering replies, His calm discernment of their purpose, or oftener still, by His fearless unveiling of their secret sins, hidden beneath the cloak of pride and hypocrisy.

All alone thus He stood, facing a world too steeped in darkness and sin to recognize its Redeemer. Alone, except for the little band of chosen ones, growing ever dearer to Him. Even the friend and Messenger who had so fervently proclaimed His coming, the faithful witness, John the Baptist, was no longer bearing His testimony. Through the malice and vengeance of the tyrant Herod, whose life of sin the brave servant of God had dared to reprove, John was now pining in a dreary prison cell. The Voice which had so suddenly and fearlessly spoken from the heart of the wilderness was no longer heard declaring its thrilling message.

Sad and disappointing, truly, must this inglorious end of His glorious mission have seemed to the faithful Messenger. Where was He whose glad forerunner he himself had been; whose kingdom he himself had proclaimed, and whose mighty power he had hoped to see so speedily established? So far as could be learned, in this his lonely cell, that One—unrecognized, unacknowledged yet—was still pursuing what might be called an obscure career; and he, the divinely appointed Messenger of that One, languishing in prison, awaiting an ignominious death.

No wonder the heart of the lonely prisoner drooped within him, while faith and hope ebbed low; and, availing himself of two faithful ones who, having followed him in happier days, still hovered near his

barred casement, he sends them to Jesus with the heart-searching, heart-yearning question: "Art Thou, indeed, He whom we have thought, He for whom we have waited and hoped so long, or is there yet another?"

The message reached Jesus as He stood in the midst of a pressing, pleading throng; and, unheeding for the time, the messengers, He quietly pursued His work, healing the sick, restoring the blind, the lame, the deaf and the dumb, ministering to every form of human suffering.

Then, turning to those awaiting His answer, calmly He said:

"Go back, and tell John what you have seen; how that the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised; to the poor the glad message of salvation is preached; and blessed is he who, notwithstanding My lowly life, shall yet believe and trust in Me."

Full well He knew that, to the well-stored mind of John, at once would recur that striking prophecy, uttered so long before—words speaking more forcibly than any new declaration could do: "Be strong, fear not; behold your God will come; He will come, and the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped; then shall the lame man leap, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing; for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert."

But, as though yet further to cheer and compensate His faithful friend and servant, Jesus now turned Himself again to the crowd about Him, and, knowing that the great Preacher was still fervently remem-

bered among them, He poured forth one of the noblest and most beautiful eulogies ever uttered of a human being, and which, coming thus, from the lips of Him never more, now, to be doubted by that one of whom they spoke, must inexpressibly have cheered and comforted the lonely prisoner, when repeated by the trusty messengers.

It was but a short time after this that the brave defender of God's pure law and truth went to his death; and the friends who had loved him so well came, in their sorrow, to tell Jesus, knowing that they would not grieve alone for the one thus taken from them.

Nor were they mistaken; though, in His Divine nature, knowing all things, ordering all things, yet, in His likewise perfect human nature, Jesus sorrowed deeply for this friend of His youth—this faithful witness, first to recognize, and first to proclaim, His mission to man. Not soon would He find a heart so true and fearless among those now gathering about Him; and, in His lonely, human sorrow, He longed to escape, for a time, from His busy labors, withdrawing to a quiet spot in the desert, where He might, for a little while, be undisturbed.

Not long was He permitted even this solace. Discovering His place of retirement, full soon the eager multitude once more sought Him; but, without one word of impatience or annoyance, no sooner did He look upon them, than He put aside His own sorrows, that He might heal and comfort theirs.

XIX.

The Good Shepherd.

MORE than a year had now passed since the beginning of that public ministry, in which Jesus, Son of man and Son of God, had given Himself to the great work of leading mankind back to the Father in Heaven. All the world seemed to Him but a great flock of helpless sheep that had strayed away from the true fold. Therefore, He had come, as He Himself often declared, a Shepherd, the good Shepherd, in search of the lost and straying; moreover, a Shepherd who would lay down His life, willingly, if need be, for the welfare of His sheep, and if only thus they might be brought back to the fold.

Thus it was, that He spared Himself in no way, if only He might win the hearts of men, or manifest to them the love, power, and goodness of that Father yearning to reclaim them. Nevertheless, He also strove daily to teach what was needful in that purer, higher life which, as children of God, throwing off the bondage of sin, it should be man's aim to live, a life which should rise above the mere observances of outward forms, and seek that closer, more real union with God now to be revealed to mankind.

"All these forms hitherto observed," He declared, "have been but as shadows of better things to come; they were good, in themselves, and had their mission, else God had not ordained them. Therefore, I am not come to reprove, or destroy them; rather to fulfil; to make known that of which they have but been the shadow and promise."

Truly, the old Jewish Church had been but a preparation for the grander, more spiritual Church which Jesus had come to establish. The daily sacrifice of an innocent lamb had but been a type or foreshadowing of a yet greater, an all-sufficient Sacrifice; soon to be made known, and which should be offered, once for all, for the sins of the whole world. Thus it was that of this, and many other features of that earlier worship, Jesus could declare,—"Old things are to pass away, all things to become new." But they were to pass away only in being fulfilled, just as a bud passes away when it becomes the perfect flower, as a prophecy passes away when no longer a prophecy, but a fulfilment.

This was the great work, then, which Jesus had come to accomplish; and putting aside all the glory and majesty which, as the Son of God He might so truly have claimed, gladly He took upon Himself man's lowliest life, that as a man among men, meeting in every point man's struggles and temptations He might, in the fullest sense, be unto men a Brother-man, and, in turn, make them, like unto Himself, true sons of God.

But no wonder that the haughty Jews, longing for a Messiah and Saviour great in earthly power and greatness, refused to recognize the promised One in this lowly young Prophet of Nazareth. Notwithstanding His marvellous works, and yet more, His wonderful words of life and truth, coldly they rejected Him, and scornfully derided His claims as their would-be Saviour.

It is true, never did Jesus seek to win these cold hearts by dazzling exhibitions of His power; only as

occasion demanded, in response to the needy, the afflicted, and the suffering, were His greatest miracles wrought; and since, as a rule, the rich and haughty scorn to be among His followers, it was by the poor and lowly that these were most frequently witnessed; for it was to these lowly ones that the loving heart of Jesus reached out most tenderly, and, like a mighty magnet, drew them ever more closely unto Himself.

Not altogether, however, was that magnet unfelt by those higher in station and influence. A few proclaimed boldly their growing regard for this new Teacher of men, if not full faith in His wondrous claims. Others, like the ruler, Nicodemus, sought Him secretly, that they might learn more of Him, before acknowledging Him openly; and others still sought Him, either through passing interest and curiosity, or with the more sinister motive of detecting some word or act which might be used against Him.

But rarely did Jesus repulse those thus seeking Him, whatever their motive. Full well He knew how best to utilize every and each opportunity in the interest of His great work. It was on one of these occasions, therefore, when having accepted the patronizing invitation of a wealthy Pharisee, by the name of Simon, to dine, that a touching and beautiful incident occurred.

There were many customs of household life in the country of Palestine, differing from our own, and particularly were these noticeable in the customs of hospitality, or entertainment. For instance, when a guest reached the house to which he had been invited, he was met at the door by the host himself, and a kiss of loving welcome imprinted on his cheek.

A servant next approached, and removing the light shoe, or sandal, in use at that time, and through which the dust of the high-way easily penetrated, cool water was brought in which to bathe the tired feet; all other requisites of the toilet were then offered, and finally, a refreshing ointment, or perfume was applied to the hair and beard, thus making the guest feel himself not only the more presentable for the table to which he was now to be conducted, but also more fitted to enjoy its bounty.

As Jesus, worn and weary, doubtless, with his ceaseless journeyings, reached the house of the proud Pharisee, none of these common courtesies, however, awaited Him. It was enough, thought the arrogant host, to permit so humble a person to his table, at all; it was wholly unnecessary to receive Him as an honored guest.

But with the quiet courtesy, contrasting so notably with the rudeness of His entertainer, Jesus took no notice of the omission; with calm dignity, He removed His own shoes at the door, and proceeded, unwashed, and unrefreshed, to the table where others were already assembled, complacent witnesses, perhaps, of the discourtesy extended Him.

Scarcely were they seated, however, when a strange and unlooked for interruption occurred. Through the open door, standing fully ajar, another custom of this warm country, there suddenly glided a woman from the street without. Waiting neither to ask or receive permission, swiftly she approached with timid, yet eager steps the divan, on which Jesus reclined, rather than sat, and impulsively dropping beside it, a moment later was pouring precious ointment on

ANOINTING THE FEET OF JESUS.

His feet, mingled with tears that fell so fast and irrepressible, that she was forced to wipe them away with the rich, full locks of hair half covering her face and bosom.

Who was she? What could she mean? Alas, to the first question the indignant, contemptuous glances of those present gave only too prompt an answer. A poor, despised outcast, whose life of sin in itself explained this rash, uninvited entrance where only men were present. This the answer read in the faces looking coldly on. With it came the silent criticism, were this Jesus of Nazareth the pure and holy "prophet" He pretends to be, He would know at once who and what this woman is, and indignantly drive her from Him.

But what the meaning of her strange and touching conduct? This was the question which was appealing to the heart of Jesus, and all too readily did He interpret it. Perhaps He had seen the poor friendless one in the crowd attending Him on His way hither; had caught the yearning appeal in her tearful eyes, when, as He told of the loving Father in Heaven, He also told of the pardon and peace awaiting all souls, however sinful and stained, if only they would come unto Him and be saved.

This then, was the poor penitent, who, half in ecstacy over the blessed hope, half uncertain yet of the pardon sought, had thus followed Him, unmindful of all else, if only she might cast herself at His feet, pour forth the gratitude of her heart in costly perfume, and cover them with her tears and her kisses.

Is it strange that, far from one word of rebuke, the loving eyes of Jesus spoke only tender sympathy, as

He looked at the weeping one beside Him. And turning, then, abruptly to the Master of the house, still looking contemptuously on, He said calmly:

"Simon, there is something I would ask of you. There were two debtors, each of whom owed their Lord money, one 500 pence, the other 50. But, inasmuch as each alike was unable to pay the debt, he freely forgave them both. Which of the two would you say would feel the greatest love and gratitude toward him?"

As if answering rather a trivial question, the supercilious host replied indifferently, "I suppose the one to whom he had forgiven most."

"You have answered wisely," responded Jesus, and pointing to the lowly one still caressing His feet, impressively He continued, "Do you see this woman, Simon? I entered your house; no water did you give Me for My feet, she has washed them with tears, and wiped them with her own hair. You had no kiss for My cheek or lip; from the time that she came in she has not ceased to kiss My feet. For My brow or cheek no ointment had you; but she has anointed My feet with costly perfume. Do you wonder, then, that I say, though her sins have been great, having been forgiven, so, too, is her love great; while he who finding in his heart little seeking forgiveness will also love little!"

Then, with a glance of tenderest compassion to the one yet kneeling beside Him, and in tones thrilling all present, quietly He said:

"My child, your faith has saved you; go in peace; your sins are forgiven you!"

No wonder that silence, born of self-conviction,

had fallen on those about Him. Uneasily from that time they began to ask, "Who is this, who not only healing sick and suffering bodies, claims power also to forgive sin!"

But not only was it to storm-tossed souls, and the heart's unrest that this wondrous voice could thus speak peace. All things earthly, all things heavenly, seemed within His wise control, while even the very elements of sea and air responded likewise to His command.

It was at the close of the weary day, that entering with His Disciples a small boat riding at anchor on the Sea of Galilee, Jesus requested them to steer for the opposite coast; and no sooner were they on their way, than yielding to the demands of wearied human nature, He sank upon a cushioned seat, and into restful slumber.

But suddenly, down upon the hill-gurt sea, almost without warning, swept one of the swift, overpowering tempests to which its region is subject. The Heavens were rent with the flashing lightning, the thunder rolled in ever deeper reverberations, the seething waves rose higher and higher, and the hearts even of those sturdy fishermen quailed within them. Hastening to Him, so quietly sleeping in their midst, the cry aroused him.

"Master, awake! Is it nothing to you that we perish!"

As though the Shepherd could forget His flock, sleeping or waking! With but one glance of tender reproach, He gently answered:

"Why are ye fearful, O, ye of little faith! Have ye yet so little trust in Me?"

Then passing to the side of the boat, calmly He looked out on the raging tempest, quietly He stretched forth His hand, and uttered but three words, PEACE, BE STILL!"

Instantly there was a great peace on the angry waters, and the troubled sea was at rest.

XX.

THE GREAT PHYSICIAN.

MORE and more wide-spread had grown the fame of Jesus as a worker of miracles, a Teacher such as even the most learned Rabbis could not confound; and above all, as a tender and merciful Physician, such as Israel had never known.

It is not strange, therefore, that often while already engaged in busy ministrations, messengers from afar would press their way through the throng, and with pleading importunity, beg that He would come to some loved one sinking under the hand of death; and long or wearisome, as the journey might be, never was the request denied, unless it were to fulfil its desire even more speedily by a simple word of command.

It was while delivering a fervent and impressive discourse, one day, to eager ears, that such an interruption occurred. Even as He spoke there came hurrying through the crowd a man of wealth and prominence, Jairus, by name, and ruler of the Synagogue in one of the adjacent towns. It was evident his errand brooked neither hesitation nor delay. Pressing his way forward, impetuously he cast himself at the feet of Jesus, and in agitated tones cried pleadingly:

"Master, my little daughter, my only daughter, is lying at the point of death—perhaps is even now dead! Come, only come, and lay Your hand upon her and she will live!"

Could faith be stronger? With only a glance of ready love and sympathy, Jesus turned at once to accompany the eager suppliant; and moved, as usual, by curiosity to witness that which should follow, the crowd about Him likewise turned and followed closely in His foot-steps.

Suddenly, as they passed onward, Jesus paused abruptly, looked about Him an instant, and with a glance over the jostling, pressing throng, asked, in responsive tones, as if to some appeal, "Who touched Me?"

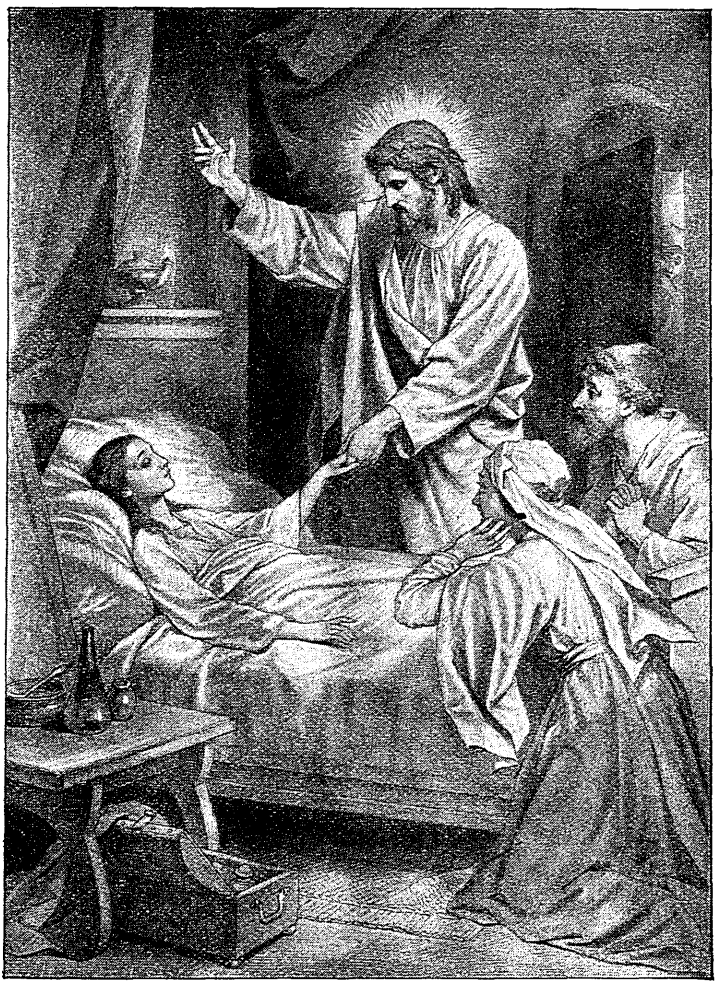
Who had touched Him? Was He not being pressed every moment by the thoughtless, eager multitude. Yet to ask, in that direct, inquiring tone, "Who touched Me?"

For a moment none spoke through astonishment. Then, a little startled, perhaps, first one, and then another, began hastily to deny having intentionally touched Him; and, to relieve, as it were, the embarrassed pause, one of the twelve, Simon Peter, answered half remonstratingly:

"Master, the crowd throng and press You on every side; do You ask, then, who touched You?"

"Nay," said Jesus calmly, "but I know someone has touched Me; and power has gone forth from Me in response to that touch."

Suddenly from the crowd close behind Him came forward a timid, trembling form—a woman—with all a woman's shrinking from the publicity she was



THE RAISING OF JARIUS' DAUGHTER.

about to incur, yet advancing thus before all eyes. Falling at the feet of Jesus, in broken accents she cried:

"O Master, for twelve sad years have I languished under wasting disease sapping all my strength and life; and though I have spent all I had on physicians, it has been to grow worse rather than better. Therefore, when I saw Thee passing near, I said, 'I cannot face the great crowd about Him and make my suffering known; but if I may but draw near and touch but the hem of His garment He, the all-powerful One, can make me well.' Thus, then, I came, O Lord, and here amid the throng, it was I who touched Thee; and lo! even as I believed, that touch has made me well!"

Tears of sympathy must have glistened in many an eye as the simple story of faith and trust fell on the ears about her; and in accents indescribably sweet and comforting, Jesus said gently:

"Daughter, be of good cheer; thy faith, indeed, hath made thee whole. Go on thy way in peace."

Interesting, however, as may have been this incident to the many looking on, any interruption to the important journey must have been sadly trying to the anxious father hurrying to the bedside of his child. Alas, even as Jesus turned from the sufferer just healed, there came from the ruler's home a messenger, whose slow step and down-cast eye told his story before the sorrowful words found utterance:

"Master, it is needless to trouble the Great Physician further. Your little daughter is dead!"

None, better than Jesus, realized the awful meaning of those few words to the father's ear. But even as the cry of anguish burst from that father's heart,

there fell upon his ear the strangely comforting, yet bewildering assurance from that One at his side;

"Fear not; only believe; and your child shall yet be made well."

Uninterruptedly, therefore, the journey proceeded; and as they drew near the house, the hopeless wail of sorrow, the bitter cries of grief, smote anew the father's heart, confirming the sad tidings; for the home was crowded with friends and relatives, and already the little white-robed figure lay cold and silent on its couch of death.

With that calm majesty, never ruffled, never disturbed, save by answering chords of sympathy for human woe, Jesus entered the house, and looking around upon the grief-stricken mourners, said quietly:

"Why do you thus weep and lament? the little maid is not dead, but sleeping."

For an instant His words fell with startling effect on the hearts that heard them. But had not their own hands just prepared the beloved child for burial? What, then, could seem more meaningless, more foolish, than such an assertion from one even now but entering the house? In bitterness of heart, therefore, they laughed His astounding words to scorn, and turned from Him scoffingly.

Deigning not to notice this, in quiet tones of command, Jesus ordered that the noisy crowd be now excluded; and keeping with Him only His favored disciples, Peter, James and John, with the weeping parents, calmly He passed on to the quiet chamber of death.

A silence deep as death itself fell on those yearning, pleading hearts; a silence suddenly broken by the

matchless voice of Jesus. Taking in His own the little waxen hand, lying so still and passive, softly He said, in the sweet Syrian tongue He sometimes used:

"*Talitha cumi*—my little maid, I say unto thee, awake, arise!"

Instantly the closed lids opened, and wonderingly the eyes of the little sleeper looked into those of the loving One whose voice had reached her in the silent realm of death. Leaving her to the care of the rejoicing hearts about her, Jesus went on His way, while they who had so recently jeered His words gazed after Him, bewildered and silent for unspeakable wonder!

XXI.

JESUS, BEN-DAVID.

AS Jesus turned from the house of Jairus, still followed by the wondering crowd, suddenly there arose from the way-side the pleading cry:

"O Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy upon us!"

It was the first time the princely appellation had been addressed to the lowly Prophet of Nazareth. Evidently His birth and origin had been the subject of inquiry, and His descent, through Mary and Joseph, His supposed father, discovered of the royal House of David. With what emotions must the jealous priest, the scornful Pharisee, within that crowd, have heard that cry of faith and homage blended—"O Jesus, Ben-David, have mercy upon us!"

Quietly as ever, though, Jesus turned, to behold two blind men gropingly reaching their pleading hands toward Him, repeating their fervent cry as they made their way amid the throng.

But there were occasions when it pleased the great Physician, yearning more for the trust than the homage of men, to test the faith which thus so importunately sought Him. Moving on, now, without answer, He passed to a house on the roadway, where He paused for rest.

Undaunted, unrepulsed, the suppliants for help followed; and now, coming closer, imploringly they pressed their plea anew, till, looking earnestly upon them, in impressive tones Jesus asked:

"Do you, indeed, believe on Me—believing in your hearts that I am able to do this you ask?"

With fervor that could not be doubted, instantly they answered:

"Even so, Lord, we do believe!"

"Be it unto you, then, according to your faith," said Jesus, as He touched the sightless eyes; and, as the darkened orbs opened to the light of day, even more brightly beamed in the rays of that endless light, lighting their souls to eternal life.

"Go on your way," He now commanded them, "but keep within your own hearts that which has been done unto you!" for greater grew the crowd of eager sight-seers with each new miracle wrought, and Jesus sought not this empty adulation.

Is it strange, however, that a gift so precious could not be accepted in silence? Irrepressible joy proclaimed the gladness of the two sent forth thus blessed; and, even as they went, spreading the fame of the great Physician, there was brought to Jesus another sufferer. Pitiable, indeed, was the case. A wretched man, who, under the control, as then believed, of a spirit of evil, had lost all use of tongue or

voice, and now looked into the compassionate eyes meeting his, in dumb misery.

With quiet command, as in all such appeals, Jesus spoke, authoritatively, bidding the evil one release his hold of the unhappy victim, and, instantly, the dumb tongue was loosened, the silent voice found freedom in glad, rejoicing speech, and from the surrounding crowd broke forth the involuntary cry:

"Never has it been thus seen before in all the land of Israel!"

It was too much for the envious ones, beholding thus the marvellous power of Him they hated acknowledged with ever-increasing wonder by adoring multitudes. Something must be done to turn the tide of conviction; and raising, now, an angry voice, suddenly a Pharisee in the company cried out, insolently:

"That is easily explained; it is by the power of the Devil himself that this fellow doth cast out devils!"

A terrible, fearful charge, truly, hurled thus at One who had openly declared Himself the Son of God, the all-merciful Saviour! He whose every act, every word, spoke only of purity and holiness, thus to be not only rejected by them He sought to save, but now declared none other than the evil one deluding mankind to its destruction!

It was blasphemy beyond the conception even of the hardened hearts which uttered it. Nor was this the only time, blinded by hatred and sin, that the terrible accusation fell from their lips. But with that boundless patience which none but a heart filled with measureless love could have exercised, Jesus answered the charge with words of calm dignity, convincing the accusers, as usual, of their own folly.

"Can not even you understand," He said, "that no kingdom divided against itself can stand? If Satan, then, by his own power, cast out his own work, how shall his dominion continue? Moreover," He continued, with searching insight, "you, too, profess to release men from the power of the evil one; if I, then, pursuing the same work, cast out devils through Beelzebub, the Prince of the devils, through whom do you and your followers cast them out? Do not your own words condemn you!

"But why will you not believe?" He cried, with increasing fervor; "Why will you not recognize that, by the power of the Holy Spirit of God alone, it is that I work and do these miracles? Could one enter a strong man's house, and rob him of his possessions, without first binding and overpowering him? Can you not see, then, that it is none less than the power of God which has thus come unto you, and which, stronger than all the powers of evil, is able to cast out evil from among you?

"But, alas!" He continued, with deepening solemnity, "he that is not with Me, is against Me; and he that worketh not with Me, worketh against Me and Him that sent Me. Moreover, words spoken against Me as the Son of Man, may be forgiven. But I say unto you, blasphemy uttered against the Holy Ghost, shall not be forgiven, either in this world, or the world to come."

XXII.

Sheep in the Midst of Wolves.

EVER closer had grown the companionship of the twelve faithful followers and the Master who had chosen them. The time had now come when Jesus was to reveal to them more clearly the mission which, as His Apostles, was to be theirs; the great work which He had come to accomplish, the work of making known to mankind the new covenant of salvation, God's message of glad tidings to all the world.

This, then, was to be their mission, the work for which He had chosen, and was now so carefully training them; for the day was not far distant when, having accomplished that which He alone could do, He should return to His Father's throne in heaven, and leave these His witnesses on earth, to testify of all that He had said and done, and perpetuate the Church He had come to establish.

It was a great and glorious privilege, this to which these twelve lowly men were called, this fellowship in the Redeemer's work for mankind. But it was one which should be attended by many trials, hardships, and dangers. Therefore, it was well that it be begun while He their Guide and Teacher, was still with them.

Gathering them now about Him, tenderly, but unreservedly did Jesus tell them all that lay before them, as His followers; of the difficult pathway, which as His disciples, they must tread. Had they been so dis-

posed, it would have been a fitting time for any one of that little band to withdraw, to turn back from the arduous mission so fully portrayed. But each, in silent acquiescence, accepted anew the vow of allegiance to the One they followed, and Jesus proceeded to make known the work before them.

Already were they to go forth as His Apostles, His Messengers, spreading in His Name the glad tidings of salvation. Throughout the land of Judea, like shepherds, seeking them whom Jesus tenderly called "the lost sheep of the house of Israel." This was to be their mission; and in order that they might be fully equipped for its varied needs, there was now conferred upon them nothing less than their Master's own marvellous power, the power to heal all manner of sickness, to cast out spirits of evil, to cleanse the heretofore hopeless disease of leprosy, and even to restore to life the dead.

"Now, then," He said, as thus they stood before Him, newly consecrated for their work, "freely ye have received; freely give. Go ye into every city and town, enquiring, as ye enter, for them who may receive you; and there abide till your work and your message is accomplished; for as ye go, preach, saying: The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand; and as ye preach, minister to the sick, the poor, and the needy.

"But, alas," He continued sadly, "full well I know that I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves! If they have despised Me, even more will they despise you. If they have accused Me of working through Beelzebub, the Evil One, how much more will they accuse you, for truly, the disciple is not greater than his Master.

"Therefore, for this very cause, that you go forth in My name, will you be hated of all men, and persecuted even as I have been. But be comforted. When brought before rulers and judges for your work's sake, be not troubled as to what, or how you shall speak; for it shall be given you in that hour what you shall say. It is not you that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.

"Moreover, fear not them which though they may kill the body, have no power to hurt the soul. Fear Him only who is able to destroy both body and soul. Put your trust, then, likewise in Him. Have you never thought,—two sparrows are sold for a farthing; yet not one of these falleth to the ground without your Father's knowledge. Are ye not of more value than many sparrows? Yea, verily, I say unto you, the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

"Fear not therefore; for whosoever shall confess Me before men, him will I also confess before My Father in Heaven. Whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father. He who is not willing to take up his cross and follow Me, is not worthy of Me."

Thus Jesus strengthened and fortified His band of faithful messengers, ordaining them not merely for the brief mission now awaiting them, but for that yet greater work, in years to come, when, carrying His message to all nations, they should indeed need all the strengthening assurances implanted now so tenderly within their hearts.

Then, two and two, that they might aid and cheer each the other, Jesus sent them forth: Simon Peter and his brother Andrew; James and his brother

John; Philip and his friend Nathaniel, or Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew; the other James and Lebbæus Thaddæus; the other Simon and Judas Iscariot.

Thus they went forth, not as yet to the heathen or Gentiles, as then called; nor even to the hostile people of Samaria. As Jesus had said, first of all should that message of love be carried to the lost sheep of God's chosen flock. Nevertheless, full of yearning tenderness as that message was, full well He knew the hardened hearts ready even now to reject it; and it could but be with sadness that He saw His own flock go forth, truly, as He Himself had said, "as sheep in the midst of wolves." Unaided and alone He then resumed His own ceaseless labors.

XXIII.

He Shall Feed His Flock Like a Shepherd.

WITH the work of His Apostles now augmenting His own, more and more widespread grew the fame of Jesus of Nazareth, till all the land of Judea rang with the wonder of His name. Others than the envious Priest and Pharisee began to ask who and what can this unknown One be?

Into the palace of the godless and haughty Herod rumors of the wondrous Prophet crept, news of His marvellous works, His fearless denunciations of sin and wickedness, and His startling declaration that the Kingdom of God was at hand.

And with these rumors, a strange feeling of awe and fear crept into the heart of the tyrant. Ever and

anon came the whispered suggestion that this was indeed a greater than human voice thus telling of a life beyond the grave, of judgment to come, and the Kingdom of God, as never yet man had spoken. Clearly, He was no ordinary man, this lowly Nazarene; but who, then? Some said He must be one of the prophets of old returned to life, the great Elijah, himself, perhaps whose return, ever since his wondrous ascension, had been foretold among the Jews. But others said: "Are not His words and teachings those of the austere one so recently put to death, that stern Preacher of righteousness, called John the Baptist?"

And this suggestion it was which struck terror into the heart of the coward-tyrant, and caused him to tremble, as he heard. "John," he declared, "I have myself beheaded! Who, then, is this unknown One, of whom I hear such things?" And greater still grew his desire to see Him.

But much too proud was the haughty king to go forth to seek this great Teacher of the poor, or to invite Him to his palace; and since Jesus had not come to seek the proud and mighty, save as in lowliness of heart they sought and followed Him, He paid no attention to the indirect messages which conveyed to Him the monarch's desire to see Him. On the contrary, when later told of Herod's anger at this indifference, and reading, doubtless, the sinister purpose which had hoped to ensnare Him to ruin, as many another victim lured to those palace gates under overtures of friendliness, Jesus answered with fearless scorn:

"Go and tell that fox of the work that I do, and will do for the season appointed. Only when that

work is accomplished will I lay it down; and I am not afraid to lay down my life also, as the prophets of old, slain in the streets of Jerusalem by those they were sent to save."

Full well did Jesus know under what circumstances, and at what time, He, the lowly Nazarene, should indeed stand before the haughty king; but even then the idle curiosity of the latter should not be gratified by an exhibition of that power which one seeking only self-glory, would have been eager to display.

Several weeks had passed away, and now their appointed mission ended, the work appointed them faithfully accomplished, the twelve Apostles returned to their Master, eager to relate the success of their labors, possibly their trials, as well as joys and encouragements.

Truly it was grateful to the tired ones thus to gather once more about the Guide and Friend growing daily dearer to them; and as though with answering affection, yearning likewise for undisturbed enjoyment of this their glad reunion, no sooner had they returned than Jesus led them apart, into a quiet, retired spot, where, as He said, they might together rest awhile.

As usual, brief was the respite thus enjoyed by the great Teacher, now so widely known and sought as the Friend and Benefactor of all. Yet, whatever His own weariness, whatever His longing for rest, never did He repulse those thus seeking Him, bringing their sick and suffering, or pleading for the gracious words to which they listened with ever growing wonder.

Nor did He, on this occasion, though so soon was His retirement thus invaded by the eager throng, fol-

lowing Him here, to the desert. Uncomplainingly did He resume His loving ministry, and take up anew the blessed discourse revealing to all hearts the glorious Kingdom of God.

It must have been even with greater power and beauty than ever that He spoke; for though the day wore on, and the shadows of evening warned the multitude of approaching night, and the journey long to their distant homes, yet still they lingered, entranced by the words of Jesus. Unmindful they seemed of fatigue or hunger; and fearing, at last, that the great Teacher, Himself, was forgetful of the consequences for these thus heedless of their own needs, some of the Twelve drew near, and whispered remonstratingly:

"Master, send the multitude away, that they may go into the towns and country, round about, for food and lodging. It is late, and we are here in a desert place."

To their astonishment, Jesus looked at them quietly and answered, "They need not depart for that reason; give you them food."

They, a little company of twelve, with but scant provision for themselves, feed that vast multitude, numbering not less than five thousand men!

"Master," they cried, "we have but five loaves of bread and two small fishes (the dried and cured fish used at that time for ready food); what are they among so many?"

Ah, how slow were they still in learning the wondrous resources of that loving heart, now, as often, but testing their faith; that all-powerful heart, reaching out now, like a shepherd, to the weary, hungry flock so helpless in that desert spot. Would He see

them thus start back to their distant homes, fainting, perhaps, by the way-side?

"Make the people sit down," said Jesus calmly, to the little band about Him. Then quietly taking the handful of food which had been brought Him, the five loaves and the two small fishes, He lifted His eyes, as His custom ever was, invoked God's blessing, and straightway began to break and divide the scant provision. Ceaselessly it came from His hand, given in continuous portions to the Twelve, who, in turn, distributed it rapidly through the eager crowd, the serving and served alike, wondering more and more, as the supply failed not, till at last, every outstretched hand was filled, every hungry mouth satisfied!

"Now," said Jesus, as though He would remind them that even God's freest gifts are not to be squandered, "gather up the fragments, that nothing be wasted."

And soon, the Twelve returned, each bearing a basket filled with fragments from that abundant feast!

Thus refreshed and strengthened, the great crowd now dispersed, wondering more than ever over the marvellous power of the Prophet of Nazareth. As once more they stood alone looking now upon the little group gathered at His side, Jesus asked abruptly:

"My Friends, whom do people say that I am?"

A moment's silence, and then the answer came, hesitatingly, "Some believe that Thou art John the Baptist returned to life; some, Elijah; others still, that one of the old prophets is risen again."

"But," said Jesus, with a yearning, searching gaze

into the faces looking into His, "whom do *you* say that I am?"

With all the faith and fervor of a strong nature thrilling in his tones, Simon Peter answered for the group:

"Thou art CHRIST, the MESSIAH, *the Son of the Living God!*"

Comforting, indeed, to the heart of Jesus must it have been to know Himself thus recognized, at least, by those upon whose love and faith He most leaned, in the accomplishment of His great work. But the time had not yet come when they should speak freely of this to their fellow-men. Therefore, He charged them to silence on the subject, saying to them, in words sadly mysterious and inexplicable as yet:

"The Son of man must suffer many things before this truth shall be fully recognized; He must be rejected by the chief-priests, the Scribes, and rulers of the people; shall be slain, and raised again the third day."

No wonder those twelve devoted ones looked upon Him in silent amazement, wholly unable to understand such terrible words. But giving them no explanation, at present, Jesus now requested that they go down to the sea, not far distant, and taking ship in a little vessel there anchored, cross over to the other side. He would follow later, seeking meanwhile a brief rest after the labors of the day.

As often heretofore that rest was prayer. Upon the solitary mountain top, He now poured forth His heart to that One who alone knew all that the sad words just uttered foreshadowed, and to whom He could speak, as to no earthly friend.

This communion with His Father in Heaven was the one great comfort that soothed the earthly lot of Jesus. But even now, as He prayed, glancing from that mountain summit, His eye beheld His little flock, the little band which had so shortly left Him, in imminent peril.

A sudden storm had arisen on the treacherous sea; and now, as He looked, behold, the frail ship was being tossed from side to side, on the restless, rising waves.

A moment later, and a wondrous sight met the gaze of the anxious ones in that little ship. Coming toward them across the angry waters, a dim form could be indistinctly seen, its white garments revealed against the blackness of the night, as with unfaltering step, the waves were trodden as a highway!

Who or what could it be! They held their breath with fear; and then, as the majestic Form drew nearer, from several voices broke the startled cry:—"It is a spirit!" "It is a spirit!"

But straightway, from across the darkened billows, came the voice they knew so well:

"Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid!"

It was like a father's voice falling on the ear of startled children; and in the glad relief, Peter, the ever impulsive, ever eager, cried out:

"Lord, if it be Thou, let me come to Thee, on the water!"

"Come," said Jesus, in ready acquiescence; and without a moment's hesitation, strong in his own self-confident zeal, Peter sprang from the ship.

But, alas, no sooner had the chill waters, and those yawning depths below closed about him, than terror

laid hold upon his heart. His brain whirled with the sense of his own helplessness; and stretching forth his hands in blind despair, even as he sank, he cried:

"Save, Lord, or I perish!"

Already was that loving One at his side; and reaching forth His own strong hand, with ready ease, Jesus supported the sinking form, His firm voice whispering with tender reproach the while:

"Could you not trust Me, my friend; is your faith still so weak and wavering?"

And no sooner had they reached the ship, than the stormy wind ceased its raging; and as the little band once more gathered about their Friend and Master, once more they whispered in tones of love and deepening reverence:

"Truly this is, indeed, the Son of God!"

XXIV.

The Bread of Heaven.

IT is not strange that a miracle so striking, appealing so directly to the senses of men, as that supply of food in the wilderness for five thousand people, should have made a most vivid impression on those who saw and shared it. Such was the enthusiasm of the great crowd thus marvellously fed and strengthened, that, as it dispersed, from mouth to mouth passed the joyous declaration: "This can be none other than the Prophet so long promised the world;" and, like a fire which had smouldered long, the ardor of admiring hearts now burst forth in a sudden, eager demand that Jesus of Nazareth at once be proclaimed King of Israel!

But it was a kingdom of hungry hearts and souls longing for God that Jesus sought to win; not one attracted by the recognition of His power to supply bodily needs or gifts. Therefore, He had taken no notice of the ardent suggestion of the adoring crowd, and, in fact, had withdrawn Himself the more speedily from its presence.

The time had evidently now come, however, when it was needful that He should more clearly than ever before proclaim His mission to men, and declare the great purpose of that two-fold life in their midst—alike their Saviour and their fellow-man.

On the very next day, therefore, having, as related, joined His disciples on the sea of Gennesaret, and crossed with them to the opposite side, Jesus was met near the city of Capernaum by much the same crowd fed on the previous evening, re-enforced by many attracted by their story; and, reading readily the thoughts and motives animating them, Jesus looked about on the great throng, and, with a ring of sadness in His tones, said gravely:

"Verily, I say unto you, it is not for Myself that you thus seek Me, nor for that which is within Me; but because of the bread received of Me. Strive not so eagerly for the food which satisfies for a time only, but for that which shall strengthen you to everlasting life, and which He whom God hath sent will give you."

The impressive tone and words were not without effect on the hearts about Him, and a voice, whether from some earnest seeker after truth, or, possibly, some enemy hoping to confuse Him, now asked suddenly:

"What is it, Master, that God would have us do, that His work be accomplished?"

Straight and unfaltering, the answer came: "This is the work which God at present requires of you—that you believe on Him whom He has sent."

Full well they knew to whom He thus referred; and now, with equal directness, the questioner asked: "But what proof do you offer us?—by what sign are we to know that you are indeed thus sent to us from God? When Moses led his people, as God's Prophet, he brought down manna—bread direct from heaven; he did not feed them with ordinary, earthly food."

With quiet rebuke of the ignorance thus displayed, Jesus answered, calmly: "It was not Moses who gave you that bread from above; it was your Father in Heaven; and He it is who now offers you the true Bread from Heaven; for the Bread of God is He who has come down from Heaven to give life to the world."

"Then, Lord," cried a voice in fervent longing, "evermore give us this Bread!"

Instantly Jesus answered: "I am the Bread of Life; he that will come unto Me, shall never hunger more; and he that will believe on Me, shall never thirst. But, alas, as I have already told you, though you have seen Me, you will not believe on Me! Nevertheless, all whom the Father giveth Me, shall come to Me, and whosoever cometh I will in no wise cast out. For I have come not to do My own will, but the will of Him which sent Me; and this is the Father's will, that everyone that believeth on Me, His Son, shall have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last Day."

But here angry murmurs began to stir the crowd. Who was this thus daring to proclaim Himself openly, now, and without reserve, the Son of God and Saviour of the world!

"Is He not Jesus of Nazareth!" they cried, "the son of Joseph and Mary, well known to us all; and yet distinctly affirming that He has come down from Heaven!"

Jesus caught the scornful murmur, and answered calmly, "Why will you thus doubt and question among yourselves? None can come unto Me, except God so wills it; for is it not written in your own prophets that all seekers of the truth shall be taught of God? They only, therefore, who are thus led by the Father shall come unto Me; and once more I say to you, all such shall have everlasting life. Your fathers, as you have just said, did truly eat of the manna which fell in the wilderness; but they are all dead. I am the Bread of Life, that Bread which has come down from Heaven, and of which man may eat, and never die. I am the living Bread; for the Bread which I will give is My Flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

Instantly the angry murmurs grew louder. Unwilling, or incapable of seeing the beautiful meaning hidden beneath His words, His enemies seized merely their surface expression, and now with mingled scorn and anger cried:

"How can this man give us His flesh to eat!"

Knowing that in due time, if not now, His words would be fully understood, with unruffled calmness Jesus answered yet more impressively:

"Verily and truly say I yet more; except ye eat the

flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood ye have no life in you."

Full well has time and events taught the world the meaning of these strange, mystical words. But it is not strange that they fell with bewildering, irritating effect on the ears that heard them, unwilling, humbly to seek the explanation Jesus would willingly have given. Sullenly, coldly, that very crowd which only the evening before, would have made Him king, began now to disperse, many withdrawing never again to seek Him. Indignantly, scornfully, His enemies turned from Him, angrily refusing to hear Him further; and awed, distressed by this outspoken disapproval of their Master, even the Twelve looked at Him with anxious, disturbed countenances, till Jesus in accents touched with sadness asked:

"And will you, too, go from me?"

With all His warm, impulsive affection, yet with something wistful in His tones, Peter answered:

"Lord, if we turn from Thee, to whom shall we go? Who has the words of eternal life, if Thou have not? Moreover," he continued, faith and trust once more rising above every doubt, "moreover, we believe, and are sure that Thou art, in truth, the Christ, the Son of the living God!"

With a gaze of yearning tenderness, Jesus looked at the little group; and then, in tones which startled every heart present, He said slowly, as one looking far into the distance:

"Yes, truly, have I not chosen you Myself, you twelve; and yet one of you is a devil!"

What could these terrible words mean! None dared to ask and the little company moved on in silence.

XXV.

A Vision of Glory.

FAITHFULLY, unfalteringly, yet doubtless with deepening sadness, Jesus, Son of God, and Son of man, pursued the great work He had come to accomplish.

It was not that the coldness and rejection met on every side was unexpected. From the beginning He had known all things. Had known just how His efforts for man would be received; and how, as He Himself had said, the great truth He sought to reveal should be like a seed growing slowly, or like leaven hidden in the apparently lifeless flour, working slowly though ceaselessly, till the whole world should recognize and acknowledge its influence.

Nevertheless, even as God the Father grieves continually over the hardness of hearts rejecting His love and mercy, so likewise did Jesus, His Son, grieve with pitying compassion for the blindness of the hearts about Him, laboring under the weary load of sin and sorrow, yet wilfully rejecting the help reached out to them. With loving tenderness, therefore, He called to them still:

"Come unto Me, all ye that are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly of heart, and you shall find rest unto your souls. My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

How light, truly, as compared to that yoke which the rigid laws and hard exactions of man had placed

upon them. His yoke, fashioned by love and wisdom and, therefore, increasing not the burden, but guiding and strengthening him who bore it.

Nor was it only to weary souls He ministered. Faithfully likewise did He labor ceaselessly in relief of bodily needs; healing still the sick, cleansing the hopeless lepers, and once again feeding the faint and hungry multitude who for three days had hung upon His words of life; and all, that they might the more fully learn, and teach others, in days to come, the exceeding power and love of the Father thus revealing Himself to mankind.

But now, as has been said, Jesus had begun to unveil to His little band of chosen followers, alike the purpose and the end of His great mission on earth—the laying down of His life for the sheep He yearned to save.

Difficult, indeed, it was for them to believe or accept a possibility so terrible. Still did they cherish in their hearts the ardent hope that their beloved Master sooner or later would arise in the might and glory of His infinite power and proclaim Himself the long-promised Messiah; would compel an unbelieving world to acknowledge His Majesty and His Kingdom, even by the strength of the sword. Ready and eager were these loyal hearts, at any hour, thus to rally closer about Him, to raise His standard, and openly declare themselves His loyal subjects.

Therefore, when once and again fell upon their ears those sad, prophetic words, "The Son of Man must suffer many things, be rejected and slain," these devoted friends believed they must be the outcome of dejection and undue anxiety, occasioned by the ani-

mosity daily manifested by His enemies. On one occasion, therefore, as Jesus thus spoke, Peter, with the rash impulsiveness so characteristic of him, dared rebuke his Master, as one would rebuke a friend for undue despondency. But with rare sternness Jesus answered firmly:

"Seek not to deter me, Peter. Like the evil one you would tempt Me from My purpose. Your heart is set upon earthly ambition more than on the things of God."

It is not strange, however, that even these faithful hearts should yearn sometime for a glimpse of that higher than earthly glory they knew to be their Master's true estate, a glory which they hoped some day to share with Him, according to His promise. Nor was it long before this yearning was gratified, though in a way most unexpected.

It was at the close of a day of busy labors. Withdrawing Himself, at last, from the crowd, and accompanied only by those three, ever dearest of His chosen witnesses—Peter, James, and John—Jesus ascended a quiet mountain height, where He might spend the night in that communion with His Father for which the crowded day left but scant leisure.

Gladly did these favored ones ever attend Him at such times, though not in their power, always, to share the vigil, nor the continuous prayer of their Master; and now, as on many another occasion, overcome by weariness, they were soon asleep on the grassy slope, yielding to the soothing influences of the mild night air.

Suddenly, as they slept, the darkness about them was illumined by a strange, inexplicable radiance.

Brighter, ever brighter, it grew, till, penetrating even the closed lids of the sleepers, it startled them from slumber. Wonderingly they gazed around them, only to be awed to trembling silence by the glorious vision before them.

On one of the mountain heights beyond, they beheld the Master they had followed hither. But could it be the lowly Jesus of Nazareth on whom they gazed? Clearly revealed against the velvet blackness of the night, He stood, but enveloped—clad, as it were—in an effulgence of glory such as no earthly power could bestow. Gone was all trace of earthly lowliness. The toil-stained garments gleamed in whiteness surpassing the snow-capped summit glowing above in the radiance; while the careworn countenance, raised in silent exaltation to Heaven, seemed reflecting its celestial glory, transfigured to beauty indescribable.

Nor was He alone, as when these, His earthly companions, had forsaken Him, in their weariness. On either side, now, stood one whom even they had no difficulty in recognizing, partly through instinct, partly through tradition and cherished portraits long familiar to every Jewish heart,—Moses, the revered Law-giver of old, and Elijah, the glorious Prophet whose return to earth was ever hoped.

These now were His companions, radiant with the glory of their celestial abode, and visibly communing thus with Him, who as the Saviour of all mankind, was likewise their Saviour, their Lord, and Redeemer. And lo, as they stood, thus engaged in fervent communion, a holy council, discoursing of that work which Jesus, the Messiah, should now so soon com-

plete, suddenly there rolled from the vault of Heaven the deep, musical thunder which had once before thrilled the blue depths of Judea's sky, and which now, as then, startled those human ears with its glorious proclamation:

THIS IS MY BELOVED SON, IN WHOM I AM WELL PLEASED; HEAR YE HIM."

Awed by that voice and the deepening radiance, breaking alike the silence and the darkness of the night, the watchers fell with faces to the earth, overcome with affright.

A moment later, the familiar voice of their Master roused them:

"Arise; be not afraid," He said; and looking up timidly, they saw He was once more alone, with only the lingering glow of that Heavenly radiance about Him.

With the eagerness of scarce conscious ecstasy, Peter cried:

"O, Lord, it is good for us to have been here! Let us make here three places of worship, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

But Jesus, recognizing the joyous excitement of heart and mind, calmed their emotion; and fearing its indiscretion He charged them to tell no one for the present the wondrous story of the night.

upon them. His yoke, fashioned by love and wisdom and, therefore, increasing not the burden, but guiding and strengthening him who bore it.

Nor was it only to weary souls He ministered. Faithfully likewise did He labor ceaselessly in relief of bodily needs; healing still the sick, cleansing the hopeless lepers, and once again feeding the faint and hungry multitude who for three days had hung upon His words of life; and all, that they might the more fully learn, and teach others, in days to come, the exceeding power and love of the Father thus revealing Himself to mankind.

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"Seek not to deter me, Peter. Like the evil one you would tempt Me from My purpose. Your heart is set upon earthly ambition more than on the things of God."

It is not strange, however, that even these faithful hearts should yearn sometime for a glimpse of that higher than earthly glory they knew to be their Master's true estate, a glory which they hoped some day to share with Him, according to His promise. Nor was it long before this yearning was gratified, though in a way most unexpected.

It was at the close of a day of busy labors. Withdrawing Himself, at last, from the crowd, and accompanied only by those three, ever dearest of His chosen witnesses—Peter, James, and John—Jesus ascended a quiet mountain height, where He might spend the night in that communion with His Father for which the crowded day left but scant leisure.

Gladly did these favored ones ever attend Him at such times, though not in their power, always, to share the vigil, nor the continuous prayer of their Master; and now, as on many another occasion, overcome by weariness, they were soon asleep on the grassy slope, yielding to the soothing influences of the mild night air.

Suddenly, as they slept, the darkness about them was illumined by a strange, inexplicable radiance.

Brighter, ever brighter, it grew, till, penetrating even the closed lids of the sleepers, it startled them from slumber. Wonderingly they gazed around them, only to be awed to trembling silence by the glorious vision before them.

On one of the mountain heights beyond, they beheld the Master they had followed hither. But could it be the lowly Jesus of Nazareth on whom they gazed? Clearly revealed against the velvet blackness of the night, He stood, but enveloped—clad, as it were—in an effulgence of glory such as no earthly power could bestow. Gone was all trace of earthly lowliness. The toil-stained garments gleamed in whiteness surpassing the snow-capped summit glowing above in the radiance; while the careworn countenance, raised in silent exaltation to Heaven, seemed reflecting its celestial glory, transfigured to beauty indescribable.

Nor was He alone, as when these, His earthly companions, had forsaken Him, in their weariness. On either side, now, stood one whom even they had no difficulty in recognizing, partly through instinct, partly through tradition and cherished portraits long familiar to every Jewish heart,—Moses, the revered Law-giver of old, and Elijah, the glorious Prophet whose return to earth was ever hoped.

These now were His companions, radiant with the glory of their celestial abode, and visibly communing thus with Him, who as the Saviour of all mankind, was likewise their Saviour, their Lord, and Redeemer. And lo, as they stood, thus engaged in fervent communion, a holy council, discoursing of that work which Jesus, the Messiah, should now so soon com-

plete, suddenly there rolled from the vault of Heaven the deep, musical thunder which had once before thrilled the blue depths of Judea's sky, and which now, as then, startled those human ears with its glorious proclamation:

THIS IS MY BELOVED SON, IN WHOM I AM WELL PLEASED; HEAR YE HIM."

Awed by that voice and the deepening radiance, breaking alike the silence and the darkness of the night, the watchers fell with faces to the earth, overcome with affright.

A moment later, the familiar voice of their Master roused them:

"Arise; be not afraid," He said; and looking up timidly, they saw He was once more alone, with only the lingering glow of that Heavenly radiance about Him.

With the eagerness of scarce conscious ecstasy, Peter cried:

"O, Lord, it is good for us to have been here! Let us make here three places of worship, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

But Jesus, recognizing the joyous excitement of heart and mind, calmed their emotion; and fearing its indiscretion He charged them to tell no one for the present the wondrous story of the night.

XXVI.

Greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven.

THE descent from that brief exaltation, that brief communion in the joy and glory of Heaven, was sadly abrupt for Jesus. With the early morning, accompanied still by His three disciples, He turned His steps down the rugged pathway, and even as they approached the foot of the mountain they beheld an agitated crowd awaiting Him.

In the midst stood one, evidently a distressed and disappointed father, supporting in his arms a son, all too perceptibly the victim of a most distressing form of epilepsy. Around them stood the little group of Apostles, that chosen band who but a short time previous, had gone forth entrusted with the message and power of their Master, and therefore sharing in a measure the fame and reputation accorded Him. Yet now they stood, helplessly looking upon the afflicted one in their midst; and as Jesus approached the distressed father came eagerly to meet Him, crying:

"O Lord, have mercy on my son. I brought him to Thy disciples, but they could do nothing for him!"

With a glance of sorrowful rebuke upon the little band failing thus so soon in their work, Jesus said sadly:

"O faithless ones, how long shall I be with you to uphold your faltering courage; how long shall I be grieved by your weak and imperfect faith?"

Then turning with that never failing compassion to the poor sufferer, even now in one of the terrible

convulsions common to his malady, Jesus said to the father, "Bring him to Me. How long has he been thus afflicted?"

"Since childhood, Lord," answered the sorrowing father, "and often has it cast him into the fire, or water, as though the evil spirit would indeed destroy him. If Thou canst do anything, have compassion on us and help us!"

With ready sympathy, but gentle firmness, Jesus answered:

"The help you ask can be yours only in measure to the faith seeking it. To him that believeth, all things are possible."

With a burst of uncontrollable tears the father cried fervently, "O Lord, I do believe; help me wherein that faith is lacking!"

It was all that Jesus asked. Turning instantly to the unhappy one, still writhing as though veritably in the grasp of some unseen foe, He cried in that voice which neither earth nor hell might disobey:

"Thou evil spirit, I command thee to come out of him and enter no more in him!"

With one fearful rending of the tortured body, leaving it, as it were, dead, the terrible convulsion ceased. Peace stole over the distorted countenance; and lifting the scarce conscious boy from the ground the Great Physician gave him into the hands of the rejoicing father.

A little later, and Jesus was alone with His chosen ones. Gathering now about Him, sadly they asked:

"Lord, why was it that we could not cast out that evil spirit?"

"Because of your unbelief, only," answered Jesus,

unfalteringly. "Must I again teach you that as followers of Me, had you faith no greater than a mustard seed, you would find nothing impossible. But I tell you plainly such faith is not easily attained. Only through faithful striving, through prayer and fasting, shall it be yours."

It had been a humiliating lesson to these so recently elated by the exercise of power which they doubtless believed infallible. A self-confidence, too often leading to failure. But such was their growing pride in the Master they followed, such their belief in the reality of that Kingdom He was to establish, and their own share in its glory, that their hopes were not easily dampened.

Even now, as their daily pilgrimage was resumed, the disciples walking somewhat in the rear of Jesus, they were discussing this very expectation. So vivid had it become to their ardent imagination that a warm dispute had actually arisen concerning the highest positions which should be merited and awarded in that Kingdom.

The eager tones and flushed countenances were not lost upon the Master. Arriving at last at their resting place, quietly but abruptly He asked:

"Of what did you dispute so warmly along the way?"

As intended, doubtless, the very question aroused them to a sense of the petty, self-seeking spirit visible in such a debate. Rebuked already by their own consciences, a sudden silence fell upon them.

Jesus did not press the question. Turning calmly to the roadside, He called to Him a little child, at play near by, answering with ready trust and obedi-

"SUFFER THE LITTLE ONES TO COME UNTO ME."

ence His call, and, to the growing wonder of those about Him, He gently placed the little one into their midst, then in tones impressive in their deep earnestness, slowly He said:

"Verily and truly I say unto you, except your hearts be converted, except you turn earthly desires from all and yield yourselves to God, even as this little child, ye shall not enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Whosoever, therefore, shall humble himself most truly, accepting the will and word of God, even as a little child, he it is who shall be greatest in that Kingdom."

This was in truth a new lesson for hearts long-trained to look upon knowledge and difficult feats in so-called piety as entrance favors to the Heavenly Kingdom. Once again, therefore, was the needed truth to be impressed on their hearts amid a yet larger audience.

It was as Jesus sat one day, later, on the grassy road-side, surrounded by the usual throng of followers, that a little company of women were seen approaching, bringing their little ones that the great Rabbi, according to a custom of the day, might lay His hands on them, and bless them.

But the eager ones about Him, listening in rapt interest to His discourse, resented the interruption. They would not have the Master disturbed for purposes so trivial. With impatient gestures, therefore, they motioned the timid intruders away, whispering reprovingly, "Take these children hence; what do they here?"

It was on the outskirts of the crowd that the scene was passing; but it did not escape the eye of Jesus. Turning with sharp displeasure to those re-

pelling the little group, sternly He rebuked the interference, and straightway, in tones of indescribable sweetness He called:

"Suffer the little ones to come unto Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven. Have I not told you, and once more, verily I say unto you, whosoever receiveth not God's message of love and salvation, even as these little children, he shall not enter that Kingdom."

Then gathering them closely about Him, and the little ones in His arms, lovingly He caressed and blessed them, while the glad mothers looked on, their own hearts going out to this tender Shepherd of Israel in love and reverence never felt before.

XXVII.

Friends and Foes.

RAPIDLY the days were passing marked by the ever-growing ministry of the Prophet of Nazareth. It is not strange that more and more conflicting became the opinions of men concerning Him, and truly it was a mingled crowd that followed Him, day by day; some drawn by the wonder of His works, others in quest of the aid which He alone could give; others still, in growing love and confidence; others, alas, animated only by bitter hate and enmity, hoping ever to detect some word or act through which He might be openly accused and convicted as an impostor.

For strange as it seems, even His marvellous works, His wisdom and His spotless life, alike, had been powerless to soften many of the hearts hardened

against Him; and many there were among the bigoted priests and rulers of the people, who sought more eagerly than ever His destruction.

More and more had Jesus separated Himself from the ties of His earthly life, including even the mother so dear to His human nature, yet whose clinging affection must not be allowed to draw Him from His own greater love and purpose, the accomplishment of that work which for her, as for all mankind, was to open eternal life and joy.

When, therefore, on one occasion, in the midst of His busy labors, it was told Him, "Your mother and kinsmen (relatives probably of Mary or of Joseph) are without, desiring to speak with you," it was, perhaps, with a throb of yearning remembrance, but unfaltering firmness, that He answered:

"Who is My mother, and who My brethren?" Then, with a glance of self-renunciating affection upon the sea of faces upturned to His, He added tenderly: "Behold My mother and My brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of My Father in Heaven, the same is My mother, My sister and My brother."

Perhaps it was due to this severance of earthly ties, or perhaps to that dullness ever attending the recognition of greatness nearest to us, that His human relatives were among those slowest to believe on Him. In truth, such was their blindness of heart, and perhaps, also, their anxiety, seeing the animosity His claims were kindling, that they even sought to protect Him by declaring His wondrous words and life the overwrought fancy of a mind diseased.

But calmly, unswervingly, Jesus pursued His appointed task. Full well He knew that the time would

come when His truest and most faithful followers would find it even more difficult to believe on Him; yet none the less surely would God's great work of love and mercy be accomplished.

For many months, now, His ministry had been confined mainly to the province of Galilee; but as the time approached, summoning the people of God once more to Jerusalem, in celebration of another of their annual festivals, Jesus, too, once more made ready to turn His steps thither.

Yet would He not leave His newly gathered flock wholly without a shepherd's care. Calling about Him, therefore, no less than seventy of those who had followed Him most closely, He bestowed on them, even as upon the twelve on a former occasion, His own miraculous power. Like them, also, He sent them forth, now, two and two, bidding them go through all the land, and wherever permitted, deliver the glad message of salvation, ministering, even as He, to the sick, the needy and afflicted.

Having thus sent forth His messengers, Jesus now set forth on His way toward Jerusalem, accompanied by the twelve, following ever more closely their beloved Master.

As they journeyed, their way once more lay through the province of Samaria, that section of country among the first to receive and acknowledge Jesus as the promised Messiah. But alas, for the inconstancy of human hearts, the strength of life long prejudice!

No sooner did the Samaritans learn whither His journey led, to the stronghold of their ancient enemies, than not only was their love and homage withdrawn,

but with bitter resentment He was refused, with His weary followers, rest or food within their city.

It was, indeed, a harsh reception; and overcome with indignation at this rejection of their Lord and Master, involuntarily the little band of disciples longed to see the insult punished with a manifestation of power, which should startle these stolid hearts to a recognition of His divine claims.

Quick in their resentment, therefore, the ever zealous brothers, James and John, approached their Master, asking impetuously:

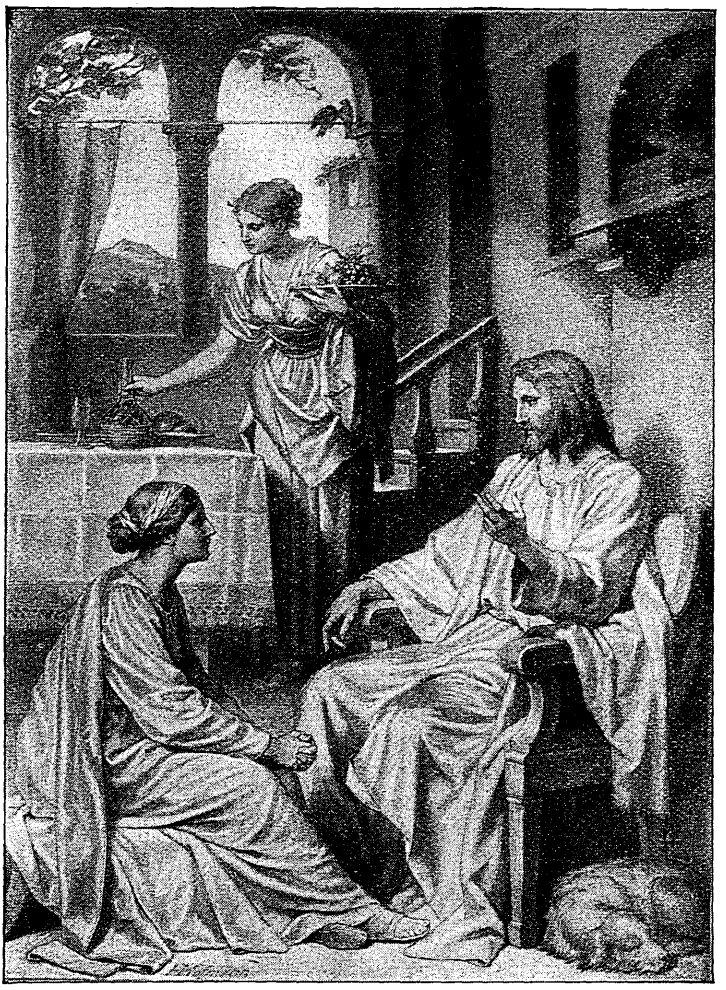
"Lord, may we not call down fire from heaven to consume these ungrateful ones, even as the prophets of old punished their revilers?"

How calm and unimpassioned the response of Jesus. "Surely you mistake the very spirit of your calling," He said, with gentle rebuke. "The Son of Man has not come to destroy, but to save."

Quietly the journey was resumed, those about Him, doubtless, recalling that lesson of patient forbearance long afterward, when insult and rejection had become their daily portion.

Travelling slowly, as was their wont, they continued their way, the long journey marked by numerous interesting incidents, and made memorable by many an impressive discourse and parable. For Jesus lost no opportunity either to serve or instruct those among whom He passed. His journeys, therefore, pursued ever on foot, from village to village, were but a continuous progress of kindly deeds and impressive teachings.

Thus it was at the close of a long day's journey they reached the little town of Bethany, a short dis-



THE HOME OF MARY AND MARTHA.

tance from Jerusalem, and overlooking the great city from the gentle slope of Mount Olivet.

It was here that Jesus ever stopped for rest; for within the peaceful village stood ever open a home dearer to the homeless Wanderer, perhaps, than any earthly spot, unless it were that home of His childhood, now left far behind, in the lowly town of Nazareth.

In this home of Bethany were friends especially dear to Jesus, and on their side, bound to Him in ties of deepest gratitude. For to one of its circle, Simon, by name, He had brought the priceless gift of health restored, had lifted the awful doom of leprosy, and bestowed instead newly given life and joy. This, alone, therefore, must have endeared the great Physician to the other inmates of that home, Martha, the busy housewife, Mary, a gentle, loving sister, and Lazarus, the fondly loved brother. But aside from this bond of gratitude there was that in the hearts of the little household which made Jesus an ever dear and honored Guest.

As He arrived on the day in question, wearied with the long and dusty journey, the hospitable Martha, on eager service intent, set about speedily the preparation of a tempting repast which should speak its own hearty welcome to the loved One and and His band of Disciples. Mary, the younger sister, had learned, long since, perhaps, that no offering was so restful to that heavenly Guest as the tribute of a loving heart; or, perhaps, in her own yearning for the Bread of Life, which He alone could give, forgetful for the time of earthly needs, joyously she seated

herself at His feet, to drink in the precious words falling from His lips.

The busy, eager Martha could not understand love so inactive. Yielding to petulance, born, doubtless, of over-wearied mind and hands, impulsively she appealed to Him she sought to honor:

"Lord, bid my sister come and help me; it is not meet to Thee or me that she leave me thus to serve alone!"

How thoroughly did Jesus comprehend these two hearts, each so full of love for Him, yet so differently estimating the service most He prized. Looking upon her with kindly rebuke in His glance, gently He answered:

"Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things, while there is but one thing needful. Mary has discovered that better part, has chosen it for her own, and it shall never be taken from her."

XXVIII.

"As Never Man Spake."

ONCE more Jesus treaded the streets of the great city, and entered the courts of His Father's House, led hither by the worship which marked the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles, one of the three great festivals of the year.

It was not so notable a season as that attending the observance of the Passover; nevertheless, the streets were much crowded, and not a few, on this occasion, had been attracted by the hope of seeing and hearing the young Prophet of Nazareth, now famous throughout the land of Judea.

Varied still were the opinions which passed from lip to lip regarding Him, some declaring cautiously, —"Surely we can at least say He is a good man!" others meeting even this commendation with the quick rejoinder,—"That cannot be, for He deceives the people, claiming to be none other than the Son of God, and the promised Messiah!"

This, indeed, they might well affirm; for nothing was truer. Had it been merely a human being, born only of earthly parents, thus openly proclaiming Himself the Son of God and Saviour of the world, He would indeed have been guilty of nothing less than sacrilege, blasphemy, and deception.

Even now, as the eager crowd jostled one another in their quest of Him, having sought Him vainly earlier in the week, He was found calmly seated in the Temple, fearlessly teaching, as heretofore, all who flocked to hear Him. And once again, were His enemies compelled to marvel at the wondrous wisdom and power of His words, and once more they questioned wonderingly,—"How has this man such knowledge, seeing He is the disciple of none of our great schools or teachers?"

As though in answer to that question, Jesus calmly replied: "The words which I speak are not mine, according to man's wisdom, but His that sent me. If you would do His will, you would know whether it were I, or God, thus speaking to you."

Unfalteringly then, once more, clearly and distinctly, did He proclaim the work which He had come to accomplish, and His oneness with the Father by whom He had been sent thus to redeem the world.

"Why should it offend you," He asked, "that I tell you of the will and the law of your Father in Heaven? Did not Moses whom you revere, give you that same law, though none of you keep it? Why do you seek to kill me for revealing to you the fulfilment of that law?"

Startled by this unexpected revelation of His knowledge of the dark designs in their own hearts, evasively they answered: "You are mad! Who seeketh to kill you?"

Deigning no notice of the cowardly equivocation, Jesus quietly continued His fearless utterances, bringing home to them now, as never before, the solemn fact that no longer under the cloak of doubt or uncertainty could they reject Him; "For," said He in tones which must have startled them, "you not only know Me, but you know whence I am, and who has sent Me!"

The ringing declaration was indeed like a fearless challenge to those who had so openly denounced Him as a blasphemer and impostor. Not a voice was raised in answer to that piercing gaze now penetrating as it seemed their inmost hearts; and those who had been silent spectators of the scene, looking upon the defenceless One standing thus unprotected in the midst of His enemies, said questioningly among themselves:

"Is not this He whom it is said they seek to kill? Yet see, how boldly He speaks, and they say nothing to Him. Can it be that the rulers know indeed that this is the very CHRIST?"

But though for the time silent, more and more indignant burned the self-blinded hearts about the

Prophet of Nazareth. Yet convinced of the hopelessness of wreaking their anger upon Him while thus surrounded by the admiring multitude, His enemies withdrew, secretly to hold a council with the Scribes and Pharisees. Surely the words uttered now in their very midst afforded sufficient ground for accusation and arrest. Moreover, delay was dangerous. Were not the people already asking: "When Christ cometh, will He do more miracles than these which are here done before our eyes!"

Without further hesitation, therefore, officers of the law were summarily dispatched to lay hands upon the Blasphemer as He taught in the Temple, and to bring Him bound to the assembled Council.

Even as they approached, however, impeded by the throng pressing ever closer about Jesus, the words holding His listeners spell-bound, fell likewise on the ears of these rough emissaries of the law, and enthralled them. Undaunted even by their presence and their known intent, fearlessly He stood, and looking upon the vast crowd gathered for this the last day, that great day of the Feast, Jesus poured forth in burning eloquence, His faithful warnings, His fervent appeals.

"If any man thirst," He cried, noting, perhaps, the eager quest for water in the crowd oppressed by the sultry heat. "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. For he that believeth on Me, as the Scripture saith, his words shall be as deep waters, and the well-spring of wisdom as a flowing brook!" (Prov. xviii. 4.)

The words rang out with startling clearness. "Surely," murmured many who listened, "these are

the words of no ordinary man; of a truth, this is the Prophet foretold of old!"

Others more bold, in fervent tones declared: "This is the CHRIST!" But again were they met by the old rejoinder, offering unconscious testimony to the claim of Him they doubted: "But shall Christ come out of Galilee? Hath not the Scriptures said, 'He shall be of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was?'"

Thus was there a division of sentiment concerning Him, but calmly Jesus stood as one unmoved; and awed and abashed, those messengers of human authority dared not lay their sin-stained hands upon Him, but returned, as they had come, to the waiting Council.

"Why have you not brought Him?" cried the indignant assembly.

"Never man spake like this man!" was the half-defiant, half awe-struck answer which met them. "We dared not lay our hands upon Him!"

"And are you, too, deceived!" scoffed their superiors. "See you any of the rulers or Pharisees believing on this Impostor? It is but the rabble that follow after Him!"

Then rose one in their midst, even the ruler Nicodemus, he who long since had sought Jesus by night, unwilling to acknowledge Him openly. Already, doubtless, had that unjust order of arrest weighed heavily on mind and heart. He could not listen in silence to this insult defaming the great Teacher.

"Doth our law permit us to judge any man," he cried sternly, "before it hear him, and know that of which he is accused?"

Astonished, for a moment, his companions looked at the speaker in silence. Then, sneeringly, one asked: "And are you, also, of Galilee? Search the Scriptures for yourself, and see if there be any prophet foretold from that wretched province!"

And thus disturbed in its deliberations, the Council sullenly dispersed.

XXIX.

A Well-Laid Trap.

But, though the enemies of the despised Prophet of Galilee had failed, for the time being, to accomplish their purpose, they had, by no means, abandoned it, and were but the more determined, if possible, to ensnare Him into some public word or act which should convict Him of contempt of the religious or civil law, and thus His ruin be more easily effected.

Animated by this motive, therefore, on the very day following that attempted arrest, a most despicable snare of this kind was prepared for Him.

As He stood in the court of the Temple, still ministering to the crowd about Him, there was suddenly seen approaching a group of apparently excited, indignant men, leading in their midst a wretched, cowering woman. No wonder that she shrank back in terror! Dragged from some haunt of sin, exposed, in the glaring light of day, to the gaze of the crowded streets, and now brought before this pure and stainless One, whose very nature must have recoiled with peculiar pain from such a scene.

"Master," they cried, with assumed deference, "this woman has been taken in the very act of sin,

such sin as by the law of Moses sentences her to be stoned to death! What is your verdict in such a case?"

Full well they knew that in purer days, when God's perfect law was, indeed, the rule and guide of life, such had been the stern penalty prescribed for like sins. But none knew better than they, also, that, owing to the very prevalence of evil of every kind, that law, with many others, had been necessarily ignored. Nevertheless, they had argued, here would be a trying dilemma to the young Teacher upholding so strenuously obedience to God's law and commandments. Could He venture openly to denounce one of those laws? And yet, could He publicly sentence to a cruel death a helpless woman, in the very presence of a multitude which, in all probability, would never permit the awful sentence to be executed?

Eagerly, therefore, they awaited the answer to that crafty question: "What is your judgment in such a case?"

To their astonishment, Jesus answered not a word. Averting His gaze from the wretched criminal longing to escape from the eyes of those about her, with silent contempt, as though He had no part in so heartless a scene, He stooped, and began slowly forming characters in the thick dust at His feet.

This would give the pitiless persecutors time to reconsider their cruel purpose, and withdraw, if so disposed. But not so readily would they abandon their craftily laid scheme; and interpreting His silence, now, perhaps, as indicative of perplexity, the more boldly they thrust their trembling prisoner before Him, and again demanded:

"Your verdict, Master; give us your decision in this most flagrant case."

Hesitating no longer, Jesus rose and confronted them. With a piercing glance, searching the hidden life of each heart there, with stinging clearness He uttered the words:

"You yourselves have declared the sentence; let him who is without sin among you cast the first stone at her."

And without another word, once more He stooped, intent on the characters He was forming.

Had He shot a veritable arrow into the designing hearts of the accusers, He could not more truly have vanquished them. Conscience stricken and self-convicted, each imagined that his sin and hypocrisy was visible to every eye about him; and overwhelmed with shame and confusion, silently they began to glide away, beginning with the older, and therefore the more despicable of the intriguers, till, suddenly lifting His eyes again, Jesus found Himself alone with the trembling criminal.

Pityingly, yet with eyes full of sorrowful rebuke, He looked upon her. "Where are your accusers, unhappy one?" he asked; "has no one condemned you to that death your sin has merited?"

"No one, Lord," she said, in quivering accents, wondering in her heart, perhaps, "will He now execute His own decree?" for instinctively she knew that here, at least, was one who was "without sin."

But as though reading the anxious thought, gently Jesus answered: "Neither do I condemn you to that death, ignorant and misguided, as you have been; go, now; but see that you sin no more!"

Discomfitted, vanquished, again His enemies had retreated before the unconquerable One—this obscure Galileean, Jesus of Nazareth; but with only the more bitterness of heart, they sought His overthrow.

"Who are you? Whom do you make yourself?" they asked, with insolent scorn, as, soon after this defeat in the Temple, they once more rallied their forces, determined to ensnare Him into some contradiction, perhaps, of Himself and His claims.

With still unruffled calmness, Jesus answered the scornful question: "I am the same that I have said unto you from the first—Him whom the Father hath sent; and you, when you shall have lifted up the Son of man, then shall you know that I am He; and that I do only that which my Father hath commanded."

And as He spoke those plain, unmistakable words, many believed on Him, though they could not understand those sad, recurring allusions to a time when He, the Son of God, should suffer at the hands of men.

XXX.

"To Give Sight to the Blind."

STRANGE, indeed, it seems that human hearts could remain hard and unbelieving under the direct influence of words so fervent and convincing, at times, so tender and pleading. But there are no hearts so hard as those which harden themselves against the voice and purposes of God. This was what many of the Jews were doing.

To their pride and self-will, most unwelcome was a Messiah who, ignoring the earthly glory expected, had come to them in great humility, with arms out-

Astonished, for a moment, his companions looked at the speaker in silence. Then, sneeringly, one asked: "And are you, also, of Galilee? Search the Scriptures for yourself, and see if there be any prophet foretold from that wretched province!"

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"You yourselves have declared the sentence; let him who is without sin among you cast the first stone at her."

And without another word, once more He stooped, intent on the characters He was forming.

Had He shot a veritable arrow into the designing hearts of the accusers, He could not more truly have vanquished them. Conscience stricken and self-convicted, each imagined that his sin and hypocrisy was visible to every eye about him; and overwhelmed with shame and confusion, silently they began to glide away, beginning with the older, and therefore the more despicable of the intriguers, till, suddenly lifting His eyes again, Jesus found Himself alone with the trembling criminal.

Pityingly, yet with eyes full of sorrowful rebuke, He looked upon her. "Where are your accusers, unhappy one?" he asked; "has no one condemned you to that death your sin has merited?"

"No one, Lord," she said, in quivering accents, wondering in her heart, perhaps, "will He now execute His own decree?" for instinctively she knew that here, at least, was one who was "without sin."

But as though reading the anxious thought, gently Jesus answered: "Neither do I condemn you to that death, ignorant and misguided, as you have been; go, now; but see that you sin no more!"

Discomfitted, vanquished, again His enemies had retreated before the unconquerable One—this obscure Galileean, Jesus of Nazareth; but with only the more bitterness of heart, they sought His overthrow.

"Who are you? Whom do you make yourself?" they asked, with insolent scorn, as, soon after this defeat in the Temple, they once more rallied their forces, determined to ensnare Him into some contradiction, perhaps, of Himself and His claims.

With still unruffled calmness, Jesus answered the scornful question: "I am the same that I have said unto you from the first—Him whom the Father hath sent; and you, when you shall have lifted up the Son of man, then shall you know that I am He; and that I do only that which my Father hath commanded."

And as He spoke those plain, unmistakable words, many believed on Him, though they could not understand those sad, recurring allusions to a time when He, the Son of God, should suffer at the hands of men.

XXX.

"To Give Sight to the Blind."

STRANGE, indeed, it seems that human hearts could remain hard and unbelieving under the direct influence of words so fervent and convincing, at times, so tender and pleading. But there are no hearts so hard as those which harden themselves against the voice and purposes of God. This was what many of the Jews were doing.

To their pride and self-will, most unwelcome was a Messiah who, ignoring the earthly glory expected, had come to them in great humility, with arms out-

stretched, not to their favored race alone, but to the whole great world, that all might be brought to the one great Father in Heaven. In their selfishness they had no care for the countless souls groping without, in ignorant blindness; in their pride they had no desire for a Saviour whose love should go out to these perishing ones. In their sight these untaught Gentiles were but "heathen dogs," among whom, until now, the Jews had lived apart, as it were, rejoicing in their heritage as the "chosen people" of God. Blinded by pride and self-love, they could not see that for this very purpose had they been chosen—that through the blessed Messiah, born of them, and sent first to them, they might be the means of bringing the whole world to God.

But all this was opposed to the wish of the proud Jews, in general; and thus it was that resolutely their leaders hardened their hearts against the most convincing words, and the most impressive works through which Jesus continually manifested Himself to them.

The Feast of Tabernacles was ended, and now once more He turned from the great city, where bitterness and animosity so often assailed Him, directing His steps toward the quiet rural districts, where the poor and lowly ever received and heard Him gladly.

He had gone but a short distance when, on one of the crowded thoroughfares, His disciples called His attention to a well-known beggar sitting by the wayside, who, having been blind from his birth, had long, through virtue of his sad affliction, depended on the alms of his fellow-men.

He had never sought the healing touch of Jesus, nor was it with this intention that His disciples now

called the attention of their Master to him. It was rather in that they sought an answer to a question which had risen among them; a question, indeed, which before and since that time, has stirred many a human heart.

"Master," they asked, "what is the meaning of these sad afflictions? Was this man, for instance, guilty, or did his parents before him commit some sin, that he should have been born blind?"

"In this case," answered Jesus, "neither the man nor the parents have been guilty of sin; the affliction has been sent, rather, that through it the glory and power of God might be manifested."

And approaching now the sightless one, Jesus stooped, and spitting on the dust, He made a salve of the clay thus moistened, an eye remedy in frequent use at that time, and with this gently anointed the eyes of the one before Him. Then, in His voice of quiet command, "Go, now," He said, "and wash in the pool of Siloam," one of the public pools not far distant.

Waiting neither to doubt or question, instantly the man obeyed. Obeyed, to return shortly in an ecstasy of joy and wonder, praising God for the marvellous gift which had so unexpectedly come to him—the priceless gift of sight!

Jesus and His little band of disciples had passed on. It was a road, however, frequented by many, and as the newly seeing one returned to the spot where he had so long been known, and where others were now passing, with looks of amazement and incredulity, there arose the cry: "Is not this he who so short a time since, sat here blind and begging?"

"No, certainly not," said others; "there is undoubtedly a strong resemblance, but of course it is not he."

"But," cried the man himself, in ringing tones of joy, "I *am he*, and none other!"

"You he, who all these years has been totally blind?" they cried incredulously; for the one thus looking on them now with newly given sight was no less than forty years of age. "Tell us, then, we pray, how have your eyes so suddenly been opened?"

"I cannot explain it to you," said the glad one, simply, "but a man who is called Jesus was passing, and stopping near me, He made clay, and anointing my eyes, bade me go and wash in the pool of Siloam. I went and washed, and behold, I received my sight!"

"But where is He, this marvellous Physician?" they asked eagerly.

"That I do not know," was the answer; "He had gone on His way when I returned."

It was too wonderful a miracle to be passed over lightly; and deeply interested, the friends of the restored man brought him now to some of the learned Pharisees, supposed to be able to explain all mysteries.

Nor were they wrong in this instance. Only too well did these know as they listened to the story, who the wondrous Physician was that had wrought the marvellous work. But it would not do openly to acknowledge Him or His power, to the deeply impressed crowd that had now gathered. Some means must be found for casting discredit on the Healer or His work.

As it happened, it was the Sabbath; and now, as often before, they seized upon this as a pretext for

condemning the merciful act with which Jesus had blessed the day.

"Whoever He may be," they now said, coldly, "and whatever He may have done, you surely cannot believe Him to be a man of God. You must see, yourselves, that He has no regard for the holy day."

"But," answered some of the crowd quickly, "If He be a sinner, He certainly could do no such mighty miracle!"

For a moment the wily Pharisees were disconcerted; and in order to test more fully the impression made, they turned to the man, asking indifferently:

"What do you say of this unknown One whom you believe to have opened your eyes?"

With fervor the answer came: "He is none other than a Prophet!"

The testimony was, indeed, unanswerable; and now recourse must be had in discrediting the story itself. Boldly, therefore, they declared their belief that the whole account was an imposition, till the parents of the man should be brought to prove it.

Turning to these, they asked sharply: "Is this, in truth, your son, who you say was born blind? If so, how then is he now found seeing?"

In perplexed and agitated tones the parents replied, hesitatingly: "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind. But how it is that he has received his sight, that we do not know. He is of age; let him answer for himself."

Hesitatingly they had thus answered; for with all their joy in the gift which had thus been so wonderfully bestowed they dared not utter one word of

praise for Him who had bestowed it. Already had it been proclaimed by the Priests and rulers, that anyone who should profess belief in Jesus of Nazareth, or acknowledge Him the Christ, should be declared an outcast, and expelled from the Jewish Church. For that reason, had the parents answered cautiously: "he is of age; let him speak for himself."

Once more, then, the disconcerted Pharisees called the man, and said to him, imperiously:

"You must not allow yourself to be deceived, in this matter; to God alone the praise belongs. We are convinced that this Man who has professed to heal you is a sinner!"

Emboldened by the joy still animating his whole nature, the man answered, firmly: "Whether He be a sinner, or not, I cannot say; but one thing I do know,—that whereas all these years I have been blind, now I see!"

Unable to answer logic so convincing, once more they asked him, irresolutely:

"What did He do to you? How was it that He opened your eyes?"

Irritated by this repeated questioning, the man replied impatiently: "Have I not already told you all about it, and you would not believe me; what is the good of telling it again. Would you then believe and become the disciples of Him who healed me?"

Angered beyond measure by the bold reply, indignantly they rebuked him, crying: "It is you who are His disciple! We are the followers of Moses; him we know, and that God spoke to us through him. But as for this fellow, we do not know even who He is, nor where He comes from!"

"Why, this is truly a remarkable thing!" said the man, still further emboldened by their evident irritation; "a marvellous thing, truly; a man able to do such works, and you not to know even whence He comes! Now you, yourselves, teach that God hears the prayer only of them who worship in sincerity and truth; and since the world was made, never has such a thing been known that one should open the eyes of one born blind. Is not this, then, in itself a proof that this man must be of God; else, how could He do such works?"

Filled with increasing rage, furiously they turned upon him, crying: "You son of ignorance and sin! Do you presume to instruct us?" And realizing their own discomfiture, they vented their anger in driving the offender from their presence, and declaring him from henceforth an outcast from the Church of God!

This was truly no light punishment to a Jew; and withdrawing now from the crowd, wherein he would evermore be looked upon, with coldness and aversion, the disgraced man was sitting alone, reflecting sadly, perhaps, on the misfortune which had fallen so swiftly upon the great blessing preceding it, when One suddenly stood beside him, and a voice asked gently:

"Do you believe on the Son of God?"

Wonderingly the man raised his eyes to the unknown One, and answered quickly: "The Son of God! Who is He, Master? Tell me, that I may believe!"

Quietly came the answer: "You have not only seen Him, but He it is who now speaks to you."

Then cried the man with glad and quick perception of all that had gone before, "O Lord, I do believe!"

And falling on his knees, humbly he worshipped his great deliverer.

"It was for this that I came into the world," said Jesus, meditatively, as though speaking His own thoughts aloud, "for this purpose that I came into the world—that they which see not might see; and that they which believe they see might learn that they are blind."

Some of the Pharisees were still lingering near, and overhearing the words, scornfully now they asked: "Perhaps we, too, then, are blind?"

"Would that you were!" answered Jesus, with a pity too deep for their understanding. "Were you, in truth, blind, then would you not be accountable for the sin that you are committing. But in that you boast of your sight, therefore will you indeed be held accountable for that sin."

XXXI.

The Resurrection and the Life.

OFTEN, doubtless, in His journeyings to and fro, had Jesus visited the little home in Bethany, where dwelt the friends He loved so well, Martha, Mary and Lazarus.

But it happened that He had left Jerusalem, after His recent sad rejection there; and, in fact, had departed from Judea altogether, and was ministering in the country beyond the river Jordan, when the shadow of a great sorrow fell on that little household; for Lazarus was ill, dangerously ill; and as the danger deepened, in trembling haste the sisters sent to the

Friend who had never failed them, a brief, but fervent message:

"Master, he whom Thou lovest is sick!"

"It is all that is needful," they thought, with loving trust; "He will not fail to come to us."

Yet, though the message reached Him promptly, in vain the sisters watched and waited; two days passed, in anguished expectation on their part, while calmly and uninterruptedly Jesus continued His busy ministry, healing and teaching those about Him. At the end of that time, however, He said to His disciples: "Come, we will go into Judea again."

But the proposition called forth a quick protest. "Not so, Master," they urged anxiously; "surely You have not forgotten how recently Your enemies in their bitter hatred even sought there to stone You. Will You expose Yourself to such danger again?"

"The light of day is given man in which to work," answered Jesus, quietly, in the figurative language in which He so often clothed His words; "therefore," He continued, "whosoever walketh in the light of faith and duty need not fear." "Moreover," He added, "it is necessary that I go; our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, and I go to awake him."

Wondering glances passed from one to another of the little group; and finally came the half questioning remonstrance: "If he sleep, Master, surely he is doing well."

Then said Jesus plainly: "Lazarus is dead; and I am glad, for your sakes, that I was not there to heal him, in order that your faith may be yet further strengthened. Come, let us go to him."

The faithful little band were beginning to realize

the danger gathering more darkly about their beloved Master, and gladly would they have seen Him avoid further contact with the enemies they had learned to dread. But now as they stood for a moment irresolute about Him, suddenly Thomas, one of their number, spoke out bravely: "Come," said he, "let us, indeed, go with Him, that if need be, we may also die with Him!"

Thus they came near to the little town of Bethany; and even as they came, rumor went before them, telling of the approach of the Prophet of Nazareth. So, likewise, were they soon acquainted with the sad fact that, four days since, Lazarus, the loved and valued citizen, had been laid to rest.

Slowly they continued their progress; but suddenly, while they were yet some distance from the house, a figure draped in the heavy robes of grief, came hurrying toward them. Pausing not, and as though unconscious of the presence of all save Jesus, prostrate at His feet sank the sorrowing one, while a voice broken by bitter sobs wailed the half-reproachful greeting:

"O Lord, hadst Thou but come—hadst Thou but been here, my brother had not died!"

Already had Jesus recognized the weeping voice, and in accents strangely sweet and strong, gently He answered: "Martha, your brother shall rise again."

But the words failed to convey the ready comfort intended.

"Yes, Lord," she said, with the pathetic resignation which sees its solace only in the far beyond; "I know that he shall rise again in the great resurrection at the last day."

In tones which must have thrilled every ear present with their depth of meaning, Jesus answered unfalteringly:

"I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE; he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; moreover, whosoever liveth, and believeth on Me, shall never die. Though the body sleep, death hath no power over the soul which, believing in Me, hath everlasting life. Dost thou not believe this, Martha?"

Scarce able to apply the words He spoke to her present overwhelming sorrow, somewhat evasively she answered: "Yes, Lord, I believe that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, long promised to the world."

Meanwhile, a private message had been sent to the home, where many friends had gathered, seeking to comfort the sorrowing sisters; and it was now whispered to Mary, as she sat among them:

"The Master is here, and is asking for you."

As if in response to some sudden impulse, instantly Mary arose, and quitted the house so silently that her friends said anxiously: "Come, let us follow her; she doubtless goes to the grave again to weep there."

But to their surprise, no sooner had they overtaken her, than they saw that she was hastening to meet the little company now entering the town, attending Jesus of Nazareth, with Martha already at His side. A moment more, and Mary, too, was at His feet, sobbing in heart-broken accents that same hopeless cry, the sad refrain, doubtless, of both those hearts through all those days of sorrow: "O Lord, hadst Thou been here—hadst Thou but come, my brother had not died!"

The scene was too much even for that calm, all-wise, yet also all-human heart of Jesus. As He looked on the bowed form at His feet, and heard that piteous sobbing, the tears broke from their own human fountain, and mingled unrestrainedly with the tears of those about Him. Then, steadying His voice, briefly He asked: "Where have you laid him?"

"Come, Lord, we will show Thee," came the sorrowful reply. And as they thus moved on, Jesus still silently weeping, the whisper went round among those who followed: "See how He loved him! Could not this Man who is able even to open the eyes of the blind, have saved our friend had He but been here in time?"

Momentarily the crowd had grown larger as they passed through the streets; and thus they came to the place of burial—one of those rock-hewn sepulchres, in use in that day, its entrance closed by a heavy stone.

This was the end of their journey; here they might stand around that silent tomb and weep. Alas! how cold a comfort!

But suddenly, to the startled surprise of all, the voice of Jesus broke the silence with its accents of quiet command:

"Take away the stone!"

Could He mean it? For a moment silence reigned; and then the ever practical, more collected Martha, interposed:

"Not so, Lord," she said, anxiously; "hast Thou forgotten, four days our brother has lain here in the grave; by this time corruption has already begun its work!"

How little she realized, with all her faith and rev-

erence, WHO it was to whom she thus addressed her human reasoning.

Jesus looked upon her with gentle, but firm rebuke. "Have I not told thee, Martha, that if thou wilt but believe, thou shalt see the glory and power of God?"

Instantly the quiver of excited expectancy became visible amid the throng. Closer they pressed about Him, as trembling but obedient hands now rolled away the stone. Then followed a hush such as rarely falls on an eager crowd; till, suddenly, amid the silence, the voice of Jesus again was heard. What were those words in low and tender accents, falling now like music on human ears, as with eyes upraised to heaven, He murmured:

"Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me. Not but that I know Thou hearest Me always, but for the sake of these gathered here I thank Thee, that they may now indeed believe that Thou hast sent Me."

Again the breathless stillness. Then, approaching closer the now open sepulchre, in a voice the thrilling cadence of which rang out over that silent citadel of death, and penetrated the very depths of the tomb before Him, Jesus cried:

"Lazarus, come forth!"

The momentary hush was painful now in its awed intensity. With strained eyes the multitude watched, and the sisters, with bated breath and throbbing hearts, waited—when, in the shadowy doorway of the tomb, a pallid form appeared and gazed upon them!

About the marble brow and cheek, confining still the mutely crossed hands, the burial clothes yet clung; but they were death's only hold, its last frail bonds.

"Remove them," said Jesus, "that he may be free." Then, Himself leading the way, the bewildered crowd slowly dispersed, leaving those three hearts, so strangely re-united, to the privacy for which their speechless joy yearned.

XXXII.

Love's Offering.

OF all the miracles wrought by Jesus, none, naturally, had excited the amazement, admiration and conflicting belief of the people as the marvellous work performed in Bethany. The prominence of the family in which it had occurred, the short distance from Jerusalem, and the social standing of many of those who had witnessed it, all rendered it impossible either to ignore the event or to explain it away as the idle tale of a too credulous people.

When, therefore, it was brought to the knowledge of the chief priests and rulers of Jerusalem, it was agreed that nothing less than an immediate council must be called, presided over by the High Priest himself. "For," as they exclaimed, "what are we to do! It can not be denied that this man is working miracles such as none other has ever done. If we let Him alone, the whole country will believe in Him, and this coming to the ears of our rulers in Rome, insurrection will be charged against us, and our rights and liberties taken from us."

Caiaphas, the High Priest, here raised his authoritative voice: "Most assuredly," he said, "you are very foolish to hesitate at all in this matter. Clearly

it is expedient that this one Man should die, rather than the whole nation be imperilled!" and then, with unconscious prophecy, moved by the Spirit of God, speaking thus through His own appointed Priesthood, he added, impressively: "Yes, He shall die for the welfare of His people; and not for this nation only, but for the benefit of the whole world!"

This, therefore, was the death sentence of Jesus of Nazareth. Though, for the time being, the council was compelled to adjourn with no definite plan of action agreed upon, yet, from this day, it was secretly determined that His death should be accomplished. How it should be effected was, indeed, difficult to say. By no means would it do to risk the attempt of a public arrest, with the growing devotion of the throng ever attending His footsteps; moreover, again had Jesus quietly withdrawn to the rural districts, and the smaller cities and towns that rejoiced ever in His presence.

But now, once more the great Feast of the Passover was at hand—the third which had marked His public ministry; and, knowing that He suffered no light cause to deter Him from attendance on this, the greatest of the yearly festivals, His enemies in the city were already on the alert, hoping for His appearance, and secretly issuing their commands that, if discovered among the crowd, His presence should at once be made known to the authorities.

"It is more than doubtful whether He will again venture in our midst, however," said some, little knowing the fearless strength of that pure, brave soul, and that, though it was yet six days before the Pass-over, He was already on His way toward the great city.

Again, it was at that favorite resting-spot, the beloved home in Bethany, that Jesus paused for the night. That home had now become famous as the abode of Lazarus, so wondrously raised from the dead, as also of Simon, rescued from the fatal touch of leprosy; and here, it is needless to say, a deeper love and reverence than ever welcomed the revered Guest honoring it with His presence.

More eager than ever, therefore, to do Him honor, again had a sumptuous repast been spread for Him and His accompanying Disciples, served by the faithful, zealous Martha. True to her own higher impulses, Mary had prepared for Him a different greeting.

Quietly she had slipped from the room, as Lazarus conducted the assembly to the table; and now, as they sat, half-reclining on the cushioned seats, softly she glided in again, and, gently approaching Jesus, humbly she knelt beside the feet, worn and wearied with their ceaseless journeying.

Already had the dusty sandals been laid aside; and now, in the same spirit of loving, yearning gratitude which once before had prompted a similar act in the heart of a poor, trembling outcast, the pure and saintly Mary poured upon those weary feet, from its alabaster casket, a stream of yet costlier perfume, drying them tenderly with her own soft hair, while, like sweetest incense, rising about Him, and through all the house, the fragrance of that love-offering silently floated.

No purer tribute could have been offered at the shrine of love. But, alas! there was one heart present which failed to see its beauty and its meaning.

The dark-browed Judas Iscariot, one of that little band—the chosen Twelve—looked on in silence. He it was to whom had been entrusted the common purse of the wanderers, the receptacle of all gifts or money necessary for their own needs, or their work among the poor. And, alas! as so often happens, the very contact thus with money, and its temporary possession had awakened in the heart of Judas a sleeping demon. Never before, perhaps, had he known his besetting sin—avarice and greed; but the devil was not slow in utilizing the first opportunity which could develop it. Looking now upon the scantily filled purse, from which, perhaps, he had already secretly drawn unduly, and then upon Mary's costly gift, spending its sweet life now in fragrance, the sleeping demon stirred within him, and, losing his self-control, audibly he muttered:

"What profitless extravagance! Why was not the value of this ointment—full three hundred pence—given rather to the poor!"—"Placed in my keeping," he might more truthfully have added.

But Jesus both heard and understood the censorious comment. Turning now to the speaker, with stern rebuke visible in eye and voice, He said:

"Let her alone, in her work of love and ministry! The poor you will have ever with you, and ample opportunity to minister to them; but Me you will not have always. All unknowingly, Mary has but brought this offering beforehand, anointing My body for its burial. Truly, I say unto you, now, wherever the story of My life shall be told, this loving act of hers shall be remembered also!"

With strange and saddening effect fell upon the

ears present that touching allusion, fore-shadowing more plainly than ever before the event so difficult for loving hearts to accept or comprehend. But on the countenance of him whose harsh comment had drawn it forth, might have been seen, mingling with the flush of conscious rebuke, the first gleam of deep and sinister designs, awakened, perhaps, by silent resentment.

Meanwhile, far and near was it being noised about that Jesus was here in Bethany. Many, therefore, were now flocking from all the country around, eager once more to look upon the far-famed Prophet, and with scarce less interest on the renowned Lazarus, so recently recalled from his rocky tomb. Hence, it was now become a matter of discussion among the plotters in Jerusalem, not only how they might put to death the Author of the miracle so far-reaching in its influence, but also him who was its living witness.

Very deeply, therefore, were the shadows gathering about Jesus of Nazareth; but none the less unfalteringly did He pursue that earthly mission for which alone He had come into the world.

XXXIII.

The First Day of a Memorable Week.

AS already stated, many people had been drawn to the town of Bethany, attracted by the arrival of Jesus. On the morning following that evening repast and the touching incident attending it, Jesus left the house, accompanied only by His disciples; but quickly there gathered about Him a vast throng of enthusiastic followers, flocking around Him, running

ahead to proclaim His coming, and honoring Him as a king attended by adoring subjects.

So they passed onward, down the winding road of Mt. Olivet, toward the city of Jerusalem. And as they went, denser grew the crowd, and more and more it pressed about Him, in an ardor of enthusiasm unequaled before, and to an extent, doubtless, impeding the progress of its object, as slowly He made His way in its midst.

Prompted, therefore, by this difficulty, possibly, Jesus summoned two of His disciples, bade them go to a neighboring village near which they were passing, and there finding a young colt tethered, they were to loose and bring it to Him. "Should any question your right," was His command, "say to the owner 'The Master hath need of him,' and you will not be denied."

Wondering, doubtless, but obeying, as usual, without question, the messengers departed; all was as Jesus had said, even to the instantly withdrawn remonstrance of the owner, and quickly they returned, with the animal, to Him. It was but a young, unbroken foal, never before subjected to the weight or controlling will of man. But now, at the touch and voice of Jesus, passively it yielded, as to a Master's call; and as He mounted, eager hands pressed forward to make of their own garments a fitting saddle.

Perhaps it was the sight of the revered Master mounted thus as a conqueror in their midst; or perhaps in the minds of some of that throng awoke the echoes of a prophecy uttered long ago: "Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Sion; shout O Daughter of

Jerusalem; for behold thy King cometh unto thee, bringing salvation; lowly, and riding on a colt, the foal of an ass!" Surely the picture could not have been more complete. And now, as though fulfilling that prophecy, suddenly the air was filled with rejoicing shouts, and down the mountain side, to the very ears of Jerusalem, rang out the cry:

"Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the King that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the Highest!"

Nor was this all. Stirred now to a very frenzy of ardor, as it seemed, the adoring crowd hastily cast off their outer garments or mantles, spread them upon the dusty highway, stripped from the palm trees skirting the road the long, thick leaves, and thus made a royal carpet for Him they followed, such as royalty alone had ever trodden.

It was, in truth, a royal progress; and now as they approached the city, a crowd equally large poured from its gates to meet the advancing throng. It was but to swell the deepening chorus; for catching up the glad cry, they likewise raised their voices in that fervid "Hosanna to the Son of David!" till the whole air rang with the shout, and earth, in its Spring-clad beauty, echoed back the strain!

But what of those hearts within the city's wall, hardened by hatred, embittered by envy? Could this indeed be the lowly Jesus of Nazareth they had so scorned and despised! Trembling, partly through fear as to what this popular demonstration might mean, and partly through indignation at the praises so boldly uttered, hastily they strode to meet the triumphant procession now entering, and addressing

Him who rode so calmly in its midst, they cried authoritatively:

"Master, rebuke this noisy rabble! What means this unseemly tumult!"

With quiet dignity, and fearless gaze, Jesus answered sternly:

"What means it? I tell you should these human voices withhold their tribute, the very stones of your streets would cry out in recognition of Me!"

Then pausing, here at the familiar gateway, where so often He had come and gone on that Mission now nearly ended, His gaze rested for a moment on the beautiful, but sin-blinded city. And suddenly, overcome, as it were, with an impulse of uncontrollable sorrow and yearning, tears such as no human heart may ever shed, sprang to His eyes, and stretching forth His hands He cried in unutterable tenderness:

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, had you but known,—or even now, in this your day, would you but see the things which belong to your peace! But, alas, you have turned from them, and now are they hidden from you! Behold the days will come, when your enemies shall surround you, when they shall cast a trench about you, and keep you in on every side. They shall destroy you, and your children within you; they shall not leave one stone upon another. And all, for that you have rejected that which has been sent unto you, the salvation which is yet offered!"

For a moment, the sad prophecy, so literally fulfilled a few years later, startled now the ears on which it fell. But those to whom it should have spoken most impressively, treated it with passing scorn, while the eager crowd resumed its shouts of praise.

"Who is this great One so openly honored?" asked with interest and surprise the strangers gathered from afar for the approaching Feast. To which on every side resounded the quick answer: "This is Jesus, the Prophet of Nazareth!"

"See you not," cried the Priests and Pharisees, one to another, "we are helpless! The whole world has gone out to Him, and our words count for nothing!"

A glorious day it was, truly, in the earthly history of Jesus of Nazareth; a day when, for the time, mankind seemed voluntarily to acknowledge His Sovereignty, and as long since foretold, to proclaim Him King of kings!

Alas! He alone knew how fleeting and unstable was that homage. It was indeed fitting that once, if once only, the world He had come to save should recognize its Lord and Master. But soon, full soon, as He well knew, would that homage be withdrawn, and stripped of all glory, He would be called to lay down His life for the sheep He loved so well.

It was the first day of a memorable week. As the evening drew near, once more Jesus quietly sought the peaceful town of Bethany, there with His disciples to pass the night.

XXXIV.

A Forcible Lesson Taught Anew.

WITH what satisfaction might Jesus now have withdrawn from the great city, the stronghold of His enemies. How easily might He have gathered about Him the enthusiastic hearts so recently stirred

to love and homage, and established an earthly power which should bid defiance to all His adversaries.

But His great Mission to man called Him still to that crowded city, the very heart, as it were, of the chosen Race, the living witness and custodian of God's Covenant with His people; and yet, alas, the very centre, now, of corruptions dishonoring and perverting that Covenant and its laws.

Moreover, the Passover was drawing on apace; and though unknown to those who were to engage in its celebration, Jesus knew that it should be a commemoration of the great Feast which should go down in the history of the world, indelibly impressed on the heart and mind of man eternally. Therefore, His steps, as well as His thoughts and purposes, turned continually now toward Jerusalem, with a fixed determination those about Him could not understand.

Early on the morrow succeeding that triumphant entry, too early for the reassembly of the eager crowd, once more, therefore, with His little band of faithful disciples, He took His way down the mountain roadway, and stood within the Temple courts as the morning sun was gilding anew its golden roof and pinnacles.

But early as it was, already had the usual irreverent, unseemly throng gathered about the holy edifice, long since forgetful of the lesson so forcibly impressed three years before, when, for the first time, the young Reformer of Nazareth had there made His appearance. Enforced no further by the Priests and teachers who had felt, without caring to acknowledge the fitness of that lesson, it had been allowed to

pass unheeded; and even as then could now be seen on all sides the shameful abuses which had then called it forth. Uninterruptedly, as ever, were the buyers and sellers plying their trade, amid the noisy bleatings and cries of the animals intended for sacrifice, and rising above all, the shrill wrangling of the money-changers as they vied for custom on every side.

Once more, as His eye fell upon the unhallowed scene, Jesus—Son of God and Son of Man—was moved to such indignation as merely human hearts can scarce conceive. Striding in among the motley throng, ere they had time to note His wrathful purpose, as on that former occasion, relentlessly now He overturned the tables with their hoarded treasures, fearlessly released the captives of coop and pen, and in tones which none dared question, nor disobey, once more sternly He drove the crowd before Him, crying:

"Is it not written in the word of God, 'My House shall be called of all nations the HOUSE OF PRAYER;' behold, you have made it a den of theft and trade!"

Fierce, indeed, was the anger aroused by the fearless act; and convicted again, by the very words of their own Scriptures, the self-righteous Priests and Pharisees felt the more keenly the rebuke they dared not resent. Nevertheless, the authority thus openly exercised, added but fresh fuel to their smouldering rage, and intensified their longing to humiliate and crush the indomitable One. Yet such was the growing awe and reverence of the crowd now rapidly assembling about the popular Teacher, that they dared not openly evince their bitter hatred.

Even as they stood thus in angry silence, while rapidly the Temple courts were cleared of its rude desecrators, a throng of happy children, gathering for the early service, caught sight of the beloved form of Jesus; and recalling the glad shouts of the day previous, suddenly, like an echo of those praises, the childish voices broke forth in a glad chorus:

"Hosanna to the Son of David! Hosanna in the Highest!"

It was more than those envious hearts could bear. Turning upon Him now with insolent wrath, they cried:

"Hear you not what these ignorant children are saying, uttering blasphemies in thus applying to you this sacred title!"

With unperturbed demeanor Jesus looked at them calmly, as He answer: "Yes, I hear them; and have not you, yourselves, read the prophecy of old, 'Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, God has perfected praise!'"

Abashed and again rebuked, they left Him; and once more Jesus turned to the work awaiting Him, ministering to the crowd now bringing, as ever, their sick and afflicted for His healing touch. Here throughout the day He taught and labored, delivering some of His most impressive parables, scattering broadcast, once more, the bread of life, and only with the shades of evening, seeking again the peaceful retirement of Bethany, while all the more diligently, His relentless enemies plotted and planned His overthrow and destruction.

XXXV.

The Last Appeal.

THUS had passed the second day of that eventful week, and despite the deepening murmurs of the storm gathering ever more darkly about Him, the third morning found Jesus again in His accustomed place in the Temple.

Already had those so tamely submitting to His stern rebuke of the day before, regretted that submission; and He was met by scowling glances on many faces. Quick to take advantage of this possible turn in the tide of popular sentiment, His ever ready enemies, the Priests, Scribes and Pharisees, also met Him more aggressively than ever.

"We would know," they demanded imperiously, "by what right you assume to yourself the authority you would exercise. From whom have you received it?"

Looking upon them for a moment, with quiet scorn, Jesus answered with that calmness they found so difficult to disturb:

"I will also ask of you a question, and with your answer, I will give you mine. The ministry of John the Baptist, was it of divine authority, or merely man's?"

He could not have given them a more perplexing question. About them stood eagerly listening the devout crowd by whom the great Preacher was now revered as truly one of the martyr prophets, whose life had been laid down in defence of truth. Therefore, any denial of him would have been resented

with prompt, perhaps dangerous indignation. Yet should they acknowledge him as God's messenger to this, the very One of whom he had so openly testified, how unanswerably would follow the self-convicting query—why then, did you not believe his message?

Muttering some scarce audible reply of disinclination to answer Him, they withdrew, once more abashed and discomfitted; but with hearts the more incensed toward Him who had quietly replied:

"Neither, then, will I answer your question."

All the more impatient, therefore, grew the desire to yet ensnare Jesus into some word or act affording ground for open arrest or censure; and with this design in their hearts, all through the day was He the victim of craftily devised schemes, whereby His enemies hoped to provoke or entangle Him in some unwise utterance. Difficult questions were brought to Him, touching matters of civil or religious government, and frequently with a hypocritical show of respect and deference which would have flattered a vain mind into unguarded rashness. Reading easily the artful purpose underlying all, in every case Jesus answered with a wisdom which invariably brought confusion upon the questioners themselves, and frequently to the exposure of their deep hypocrisy.

Thus the day wore on, in the exercise of His ceaseless ministry intermingled by some of the most striking discourses and parables He had ever uttered. And it was while He was thus engaged that occurred one of those touching and beautiful incidents, so often drawing from the heart of Jesus words of life and truth destined to bear rich fruit in the hearts of men long afterward.

His seat was near the Treasury, or contribution chest of the Temple, wherein, all day long, willing or reluctant hands dropped their gifts, the portion of their earthly goods long since declared the due of Him from whom all good proceeds. Jesus had noted the contributors, as they came and went, some with grudging hand and mien, others with indifferent heart, dropping their coins of gold and silver into this—God's treasury.

Among them at last, clad in impoverished robes of widowhood, a woman drew near, and all unheeding those about her, with trembling but unfaltering hand, deposited her offering—a mite, indeed, exceeding not more than half a penny.

Silently had Jesus followed her with His thoughtful gaze. Turning now to the crowd about Him, to the astonishment of every listener, abruptly He said:

"See you yon poor widow? Of the many who have brought to the treasury their gifts, this day, I tell you of a truth, she has given more than they all! They, of their abundance have given, making no sacrifice. She, in her poverty, with a loving heart, hath given all that she had. Infinitely more precious is it, therefore, in the sight of Him to whom it is offered."

It was another of the beautiful but unwelcome lessons, bringing home to many a proud heart there, the truth of God's impartial love, and His tenderness toward the lowliest of His children.

But once more the shadows of evening were drawing near; and as though conscious of yet deeper, darker shadows approaching, the heart of Jesus seemed stirred with emotions surging like rising waves

within Him, waves of mingled sorrow, pain, and yearning.

Silently, His gaze rested on the glorious buildings about Him; fondly it lingered on the beautiful city now wrapped in the glow of sunset, and then returning anew to the crowd of perishing souls surrounding Him, He lifted His voice in a sudden burst of impassioned fervor, as startlingly the words rang out:

"Woe unto you, Scribes, and Pharisees, hypocrites! For, rejecting the Kingdom of Heaven, yourselves, mercilessly would ye shut it against them who would enter! Woe unto you, ye blind guides, who professing to lead men to God, allure them but farther away, and make them two-fold more the children of evil than ever! Behold," He cried, with growing fervor, "Behold, prophets and wise men shall indeed be sent unto you, but some of them will you kill, and crucify, and some of them you will scourge, and persecute from city to city."

Then lifting His eyes once more to the fair city outstretched before Him, He paused in that terrible denunciation, and reaching forth His hands, as though in a last, yearning appeal, He cried in the tenderest accents:

"O, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen doth gather her chickens under her wings, and you would not! Alas! now are you left desolate; for henceforth, you shall see Me no more, till with believing heart you cry: 'Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord!'"

The interest and awe had become intense, as the impressive words held the audience spell-bound.

With His gaze meeting once more those upturned faces, deeper yet grew the solemnity of tone and voice, as slowly He said:

"The hour is now at hand when the Son of man shall be glorified. Except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, its life is wasted. Only thus can it bring forth fruit. So, too, he who clingeth to his earthly life shall lose it; but he who layeth down that life, shall find it again, and it shall be unto him life eternal."

Even as He spoke a shadow seemed to have fallen athwart the exaltation of soul constraining Him; and in lower tones, those nearest only caught the words:

"My soul is troubled. Father, save me from this hour!" Then, as though already strengthened by that brief appeal, reverently He added: "Yet was it not for this very purpose that I came into the world, to meet this hour! Father, glorify Thy Name!"

Instantly, across the blue vault of Heaven, rolled once more that Voice of wondrous melody:

I HAVE BOTH GLORIFIED IT, AND WILL GLORIFY IT AGAIN.

"Was it thunder?" asked some, with startled gaze into the cloudless heavens.

"No, surely, an Angel spoke to Him!" whispered others.

Answering their anxious inquiries in His own calm tones, Jesus said: "Not for My sake, but yours, came this Voice from Heaven. Soon shall come the hour of judgment for this world, when the Prince of evil shall be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me!"

The peculiar expression, as they knew, could but

refer to the form of death inflicted at that time on the worst of malefactors only, the ignominious death of the cross. A voice in the crowd now answered questioningly:

"We have ever heard that Christ would abide forever. How is it that you speak of the Son of man as suffering death, as one 'to be lifted up?' Who is this Son of man?"

But Jesus would not be drawn into another argument. Briefly, but impressively He answered: "Yet a little longer is the light with you. Walk while you have that Light, lest darkness come upon you."

The solemn discourse ended, Jesus turned His lingering gaze upon the Temple, as one who for the last time looks on some loved scene. Noting the fervor of His gaze, some of His Disciples said with all the fond pride of Jewish hearts: "See, Master, what glorious buildings these are!"

With unuterable sadness, Jesus answered: "Alas! the days will come in which there shall not be left one stone standing upon another!"

With these words on His lips, He turned away from that earthly Tabernacle of His Father, never again to enter its courts.

XXXVI.

ANOTHER GREAT PROMISE.

ON the morning of the fourth day of that week, every moment of which seemed throbbing with silent prescience of coming events, Jesus made no move to return to the city, where watchful eyes were doubtless scanning Temple, street and gateway, for

His coming. Leading His little band out upon the grassy slope of Mt. Olivet, on the outskirts of Bethany, peacefully there He resumed His teaching.

His last words, on leaving the Temple, the evening before, had made a deep impression on the hearts about Him. How could they picture, for a moment, that glorious edifice, so long the pride and boast of Jerusalem, a crumbling heap of ruins, in days however distant?—Impossible! And the awful prediction, likewise foretelling the destruction of the holy city! How could it even be dreamed of!

It was this, doubtless, of which each was thinking as they now sat where the gaze of all rested on the grand scene of city and Temple below. Scattered on the mountain slope in little groups, they sat, talking in quiet tones, till finally one of these groups composed of Peter, James, John and Andrew, approached Jesus, and with troubled faces, asked anxiously:

"Master, tell us, we pray Thee, when shall come to pass those things Thou hast so sadly foretold?"

Without reserve or evasion, therefore, did Jesus in answer, unfold to their wondering ears, events most wonderfully fulfilled but a few years later. Not only that House of God, now so often desecrated, not only that great city so polluted with vice and sin, but the proud nation itself, wilfully now rejecting the proffered offer of salvation, lay under that terrible doom. "They shall fall by the edge of the sword," said He sadly, "and shall be led away captive into all nations; and Jerusalem, that glorious city, shall be trodden beneath the feet of her enemies!"

Moreover, with equal candor, but deeper tenderness, did He once more tell them of all which, as His

followers, they must suffer; the difficulties to be encountered in accomplishing the work He should leave them to do, as bearers of the message of salvation throughout the world. Even as He, the Shepherd, had been reviled and persecuted, so too, must they who should follow in His footsteps, suffer, and many be called to lay down their life for the truth's sake.

"But fear not, little Flock," He had once said, "it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." And now to this comforting assurance was added a most precious revelation. "When this Gospel shall have been preached in all the world," He now declared "then shall the end come, and behold, the Son of man shall return unto His Kingdom. He shall return,—not again in lowly humility, but in glorious majesty, to fulfil, in truth, to His faithful followers the promises so long foretold."

Truly it was a gladdening promise, that which had now been revealed unto them; the promise that their Master should come again, to establish and perfect that Kingdom for which every heart in Israel waited longingly. But quickly discerning the eager joy and expectation written on every countenance, Jesus added with loving caution: "Yet let no one deceive you with idle predictions pertaining to that time; for of the day or the hour of that coming, knoweth no man,—no, nor the angels in Heaven, nor even the Son of man Himself,—but your Father alone. I say unto you, however, *watch*, and be ever ready; for in such hours as you think not, He shall come; and blessed is that servant who when his Lord cometh, shall be found watching."

And as though to enforce these solemn words, Jesus now impressed them indelibly on the hearts of His hearers through the last parables uttered in these His earthly discourses; earnest, impressive narratives, every one of which taught the same solemn lesson of preparation and watchfulness for the coming of One in an hour unlooked for; and each embodying the never-to-be-forgotten injunction,—"Therefore, what I say unto you, I say unto all,—WATCH!"

In fervent silence, hanging upon every word of the thrilling lesson, the little band had gathered close about their beloved Master, yet not in unity of heart, as heretofore. One of that group—one of that very circle of chosen ones—had probably heard but little, if any, of the absorbing discourse, his mind intent on busy schemes, dark beyond the heart of man, almost, to conceive. Alas! had not Jesus long since, with prophetic sadness, declared: "I have chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil!"

Surely none other than the evil one himself could have entered a heart so near that pure and holy Life, and filled it with designs so dark and base.

As the evening drew near, and the little company arose to disperse, Judas Iscariot stole away, and in the darkness and silence of night, stealthily he sped to the city near, where the enemies of Jesus, the chief priests and rulers, were still in council assembled.

"I know that you seek Him whom I follow," he whispered, in the secret audience granted. "What will you give me if I will deliver Him into your hands?"

The cruel proposition filled them with astonishment, but no less with delight.

"Thirty pieces of silver," they cried, eagerly, "we

will give you, if you will enable us to take Him quietly, without arousing the people."

Pitiably small, indeed, was the sum for the service offered; a sum not exceeding fifteen dollars of our present coinage; but it was enough for the petty soul thus tempted to swell his coffers. Straightway was the nefarious bargain made and sealed by rejoicing hearts on one side, with already gnawing qualms, perhaps, on the other; and silently the traitor withdrew to consummate his plans.

Meanwhile, as Jesus dismissed the little flock about Him, with a plainness of speech not used before, and sad but unfaltering tones, He said:

"You know that two days hence is the Passover; at that time shall the Son of Man be betrayed and crucified!"

XXXVII.

The Great Passover.

IT was Thursday morning of the Paschal Week, that day of active preparation and joyous solemnity in every Jewish household.

On that day, at evening, would be celebrated anew the Passover. Once more would the Paschal lamb be slain, as of old; and once more, as the people of God gathered about the "Feast of Remembrance," would be rehearsed the wondrous story. The story of that night which, though so long ago, seemed but as yesterday, when thus recalled; that night when darker than Egypt's sky, lay the sentence of death on the land, and to the people of God came that wondrous

deliverance, wrought through no power, no righteousness of their own, but through the blood of a lamb, ordained in love, accepted in faith and obedience.

Deliverance from bondage, rescue from death! Is it strange that though fifteen hundred years had passed, grateful hearts should still keep the great event in glad remembrance? Year by year, in loving reunion, every household gathered anew around the Passover Supper.

It was early on this morning, therefore, that Jesus said to His companions, Peter and John: "Go you and prepare for us the Passover, that we may eat it together."

But having no dwelling in common, and each having long since left his individual home to follow the homeless Master, not unnaturally they asked, with hesitation: "Where, Lord, shall we prepare it?"

"Go you into the city," He said, for they were still at Bethany, "and as you enter, you will meet one bearing a pitcher of water. Follow him, and reaching the house which he will enter, say to the master, in My name, that I desire there to eat the Passover with My disciples. He will show you a large upper chamber furnished; there make ready for us."

As usual, obedience only was necessary. Finding all as Jesus had said, the messengers fulfilled His command, and when in the afternoon, accompanied by the remainder of the band, He appeared, all was in readiness.

Here, then, in the quiet chamber, removed from the noise of the street below, they gathered about the table, Jesus, as ever, in the centre of the group, and John, the dearest to Him of all the circle, immediately

beside Him, where at times, his head might rest lovingly upon his Master's breast. No sooner were they thus seated than with peculiar earnestness Jesus said:

"With special desire have I longed to keep this Passover with you, before I suffer; for no more will I eat of it till all be fulfilled in the Kingdom of God."

The allusion to that Kingdom, possibly, or perhaps the scarce defined feeling which passing events had strengthened, concerning some crisis at hand, awakened once more among the listeners the eager questioning as to what should be their share in that Kingdom, and who should be accounted greatest therein.

Once more were they to receive even a more impressive lesson and rebuke.

Rising quietly from the table, the meal not having yet begun, Jesus laid aside His outer garment, and girded Himself with a towel, even as a servant, in the usual custom of the day, might have done; then taking a basin of water, to the astonishment of all present, from one to another He went, and, with His own hands, bathed the tired, dust-stained feet!

Peter—the warm-hearted, impulsive Peter—could not countenance this self-humiliation. "Nay, Lord," he cried, "Thou shalt never wash my feet!"

"What I do thou knowest not now, Peter," Jesus answered quietly; "thou shalt know hereafter."

"But, Master, never can I permit Thee this menial service!" cried the loving Disciple, still distressed.

"If not," answered Jesus, impressively, "then thou hast no part with Me."

Instantly, with humble submission, Peter answered fervently: "O Lord, if that be so, wash, then, not my feet only, but my hands and my head!"

"Nay," said Jesus, "that is not needful. If I wash thy feet, thou art clean. And now," He said, having finished His task, and looking around on the little group thus purified by His cleansing touch, "now are ye clean. But," He added, sadly, "*not all;*" and His eye rested for a moment on one well understanding the meaning of the words and glance.

Seating Himself among them once more, and now, as though fulfilling His recent words to Peter, Jesus said, impressively:

"Know ye what I have done? Ye call Me Master and Lord. Ye say well; for so I am. I have given you, then, an example; for, surely, the servant is not greater than his lord. If I, then, your Lord and Master, have thus served you, so should you serve one another. Let him that would be greatest among you, be as the younger, and he that would be chief, as he that doth serve."

With deepening solemnity, the meal now proceeded, Jesus, as ever, speaking many things, the full meaning of which should come to them only later, in the light of events as yet unfulfilled.

But as they thus sat, suddenly, as if moved by uncontrollable sadness as He looked upon them, Jesus uttered the startling words:

"And one of *you* shall betray Me!"

Instantly every eye was lifted in pained surprise and bewilderment, one countenance alone remaining with gaze fixed upon his plate. Then, as though unable to bear the suspense, and the weight of that accusation resting on all, from the lips of each broke the cry: "Lord, is it I?—is it I?"

And, lest his very silence should condemn him,

from the trembling lips of Judas, too, came at last the faltering question: "Is it I?"

With eyes meeting his in steadfast sadness, Jesus answered, briefly: "Thou hast said." And then, as though compassionating the unhappy position of the wretched man, He added, meaningly: "That which thou wouldst do, do quickly."

Grateful for the timely dismissal, hastily the traitor left the room, his companions still unable to comprehend the scene. And now, as though relieved of an unwelcome presence, more freely Jesus spoke, gathering His loved ones about Him in fond communion, that He might reveal that which was even now at hand, yet which they found still impossible to believe.

They had now finished that Passover Supper so full of meaning as yet unrealized. Together they had sung the hymns of old, chanting the story of the Paschal Eve. Then, with a solemnity they were never to forget, Jesus placed before Him a cake of the unleavened bread, and a cup of the wine, already sanctified as parts of the sacred Feast; but, raising His eyes in prayerful consecration anew, slowly He broke the Bread, and to each one present, with His own hand, He gave it, accompanying the act with the impressive words:

"Take, eat. This is My body which is given for you. Do this, in remembrance of Me."

Then, likewise, taking the cup, from one to another He passed it, and in the same tone of tender command, He said:

"Drink you all of this; for this is My blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many, for the remission of sin. This do, in remembrance of Me."

What could those sad, mysterious words mean? The blood of the New Testament. Full well they knew that long since it had been foretold that God would, in His own time, make a new Covenant, or Testament with His people. Full well they knew, also, that the old Covenant had been sealed in blood, the blood of lambs and bullocks. For had it not been declared: Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin. Could it be that Jesus was now declaring to them this new Covenant? A Covenant likewise to be sealed in blood, but lo, not the blood of soulless animals, but His own! He the true Lamb of God, even as His messenger had early proclaimed, "The Lamb of God" who should take away the sins of the world!

Truly was it a startling revelation thus dawning on these wondering hearts. Nor was it strange that tears of awe and sorrow filled their eyes; for as they gazed upon the loved One in their midst, it was as though the shadow of death had fallen upon them, and they could not speak for grief and anguish.

Reading this in the saddened countenances about Him, once more Jesus seated Himself amid them, and in accents vibrating with unspeakable tenderness, gently He said:

"Let not your hearts be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me." And straightway He poured into their troubled souls words of love and solace deeper, more fervent than any that had ever fallen from His lips before. "It is true, I must go from you," He said, "but I go to prepare a place for you; and not alone, or as orphans, do I leave you, for your Father in Heaven watcheth over you."

Moved by hopeless despondency, Philip impulsively exclaimed: "Lord, show us the Father, and we will ask no more!"

Meeting his yearning gaze with one of tender reproach, Jesus said impressively: "Have I been so long time with you, Philip, and yet you have not known Me? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father. Have you not yet learned that my Father and I are One, He in Me and I in Him?"

Even more clearly then, more fully than ever before, did He now make known to them the mystery of His Being, His perfect Oneness with that Father from whom He had come, and to whom He must now return, so soon as His earthly mission should be accomplished.

"But I will not leave you comfortless," He said again, with an impressiveness which was to unfold to them a new truth, or one but dimly comprehended heretofore. "Behold, I will pray the Father, and He will send you another Comforter, even the Spirit of Truth, the Holy Ghost, who shall abide with you forever. He it is who will come unto you; and though the world shall neither see nor know Him, you shall know Him. He shall never leave you, but remain with you always, bringing to your remembrance all that which I have said unto you, and guiding you continually in the work I have given you to do."

Was it not a glorious promise with which to comfort their troubled hearts! But now, His long discourse ended, Jesus lifted His voice and soul in prayer full of loving tenderness and pleading for these His loved ones; and not for these only, but for that yet greater fold, the world-wide fold of perishing souls,

for whom He was soon to lay down His life, as a Shepherd for the sheep He loved.

The memorable evening was at its close. With a brief "Let us go hence," Jesus went forth with His little flock, into the silent night.

XXXIII.

GETHSEMANE.

OUT into the night they passed, that little band, from the quiet upper chamber, numbering now but eleven, as they followed their Master, for Judas had not returned after that hasty departure.

Bidding now but three of these to accompany Him, Peter, James, and John, Jesus dismissed the others, and turned His steps toward a beautiful grove just outside the city, known as the Garden of Gethsemane.

It was full Spring time. The soft air, rich with the fragrance of bursting bud and flower, and the full moon flooding all with its golden radiance, clothed the silent night in tender beauty, as they passed onward. Together thus they sought the peaceful spot where often before Jesus had spent the night in prayer.

But to-night His soul seemed weighed down with a sadness His companions strove in vain to cheer; and in response to some word of loving assurance from them, He answered sorrowfully:

"Yet all of you shall be offended and ashamed because of Me this night; for the time has come, of which it is written, 'I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered.'"

Even as once before, on that eventful evening, with large-hearted, eager devotion, Peter answered:

"Though all be ashamed or offended, Lord, because of Thee, I will never be!"

With tender sadness, as one might look upon a child unconscious of its own weakness, Jesus said quietly: "Verily, I say unto you, Peter, this very night, before the cock shall have crowed twice for morning, you will have denied Me three times!"

But now they had reached the Garden peacefully asleep in the moonlight; and as they entered, from the lips of Jesus broke a moan of unutterable anguish: "My soul is exceeding sorrowful," He murmured, "even unto death!" Then, turning to His companions, briefly He commanded: "Stay you here, and watch, while I go further."

Thus leaving them, silently, He passed from their sight, lost in the heavy shadows of the olive trees and their rich foliage. But such was the weariness overpowering them, following the long day and the deep emotions of the evening, that from forgetfulness of that tender request, "Stay you here, and watch," the three friends were heavily sleeping on the dewy sward.

Meanwhile, amid those shadows of the drooping olives, Jesus had cast Himself down in an agony of prayer.

The hour had indeed come when the supreme purpose of His earthly mission was to be fulfilled. With it had come also the awful struggle of those two Natures, so mysteriously blended during all these years, the human and Divine. Even as in man's twofold existence, had those two natures already, per-

haps, known dark hours of conflict, sharp and sore. It was upon a supreme hour, and a supreme conflict that Jesus now had entered.

As Son of God, and in His perfect Oneness with the Father; in His yearning love for man, as the Redeemer of the world, His Spirit had looked with passionate eagerness to the sacrifice ordained; for truly it was to this end that He had come into the world. But as Son of man, bearing in all respects man's human nature, it was in the very essence of that nature that He should shrink from the awful ordeal awaiting Him, the sinless condemnation, the ignominious death of bitter shame and suffering, as only humanity so perfect alone could. And lifting now His eyes to Heaven, it was the human heart in all its measureless human anguish that cried:

"My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not My will, but Thine be done!"

For the moment soothed and strengthened, He rose, and went to the entrance where he had left those three of whose love and loyalty He might at least be sure. Had not one but a moment since declared a heart's, a life's devotion! Alas, forgetful of all the hidden dangers the night might hold for their friend and Master, silent they lay, in heavy slumber!

"Peter," said Jesus, in sudden yearning, and recalling, doubtless, that late profession, "could you not watch with Me *one* hour?" Then, as His eyes rested compassionately upon those faces wearied and worn, as they lay revealed in the moonlight, with tender comprehension He added sadly, "Truly the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak!"

Yet filled anew with that sense of loneness so overwhelming to a heart attuned to love and sympathy, as was this most tender of human hearts, once more He withdrew to the inner sanctuary of that shadowy Temple, illumined only by the lamps of Heaven, and again and again arose that pleading prayer: "O, Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not My will, but Thine be done!" And as He prayed, lo, on His pallid brow, burst forth the rare tears of a breaking heart; that dew of molten love and anguish—great crimson drops of blood!

But peace and strength had come with that heart's complete surrender, that perfect acceptance of the Father's will. In the silence of the night, an Angel from that Father's courts drew near, bearing Heaven's own ministries, Heaven's own priceless comfort.

It was well the conflict was ended. Suddenly, pushing rudely past the sleeping sentries, at the gate, a motley crowd burst upon the peaceful scene, invading the pure moonlight with the glare of torches. Rushing forward, their leader stood revealed—Judas, the dark-browed traitor!

Cringingly, falteringly, he approached, and with all a traitor's foul dissemblance, on the pure cheek of Jesus, tremblingly he pressed a kiss, while from his lips came half-audibly the treacherous salutation: "Hail, Master!"

But it was sufficient. "He whom I salute with a kiss, the same is Jesus," he had said to those he led. And passively had Jesus accepted that greeting, fixing only upon the shrinking one a glance which must have penetrated his very soul, while the calm words smote his ear:

"Is it with a kiss, Judas, that you, My friend, betray Me?"

Then turning to the ruffianly band already surrounding Him, with equal calmness, Jesus asked:

"Whom seek you?"

"Jesus of Nazareth," they answered briefly.

With corresponding brevity Jesus answered:

"I am He; but how is it that you come with swords and staves to take Me? Have I not been daily in the Temple, and on your streets, and you made no effort to arrest Me?"

Utterly confounded by a composure and acquiescence so unexpected, the rude assembly fell back for a moment, as though disarmed; and it was Jesus who again broke the silence, saying quietly:

"I have told you that I am Jesus of Nazareth; if, then, you come in quest of Me, take Me, but," He added with a glance of tenderness toward His three disciples now approaching with dazed and troubled faces, "let these go their way."

But all the fiery, impulsive nature of Peter was now aroused; and quickly drawing his sword from its scabbard at his side, blindly he struck about him, as best he could in the flickering light, inflicting a deep-laid gash on the ear of an officer near him.

Quickly, however, Jesus interposed: "Put up thy sword, Peter," He said in grave command; "they that use the sword are they who likewise perish by the sword. Moreover, I need not its defence. Know you not, that even now, should I appeal to My Father in Heaven, legions of angels would answer My call? But how, then, shall the Promise of Scrip-

ture be fulfilled? The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?"

Even as He spoke, with silent touch, He had healed the smitten ear; but it was the last work of the great Physician's compassionate hand. The freshly excited crowd had closed about Him, and, binding those unresisting hands with needless cords, ruthlessly they led Him away.

XXXIX.

NUMBERED WITH THE TRANSGRESSORS.

HELPLESS, defenceless, in the presence of His enemies, at last He stood, the Prophet of Nazareth; He who so long had defied the power which would have crushed Him, so quietly eluded the snares and intrigues which long since would have compassed His destruction.

Surely now would that calm, majestic demeanor cringe and bend before those whose power, once triumphant, He well must know. Though it was midnight, impatient yet they sat in the council chamber. Caiaphas, the High Priest, Annas, his father-in-law, with the scribes and elders, in solemn council assembled, awaiting the return of their emissaries, led by the traitor Judas. He did not fail them. While yet the city slept in silence, the motley crowd returned, leading in their midst Jesus of Nazareth.

Thus it was, then, that at last He stood before them. But—could it be? Ignominiously bound and fettered, yet still that unperturbed, unflinching mien;

still that undefined bearing of a conqueror, not a prisoner brought at last to bay.

Discomfitted, quailing, as ever, before that serene, fixed gaze, for a moment the would-be judges seemed at a loss how to proceed in that which must bear some semblance to the justice of a trial. What should they bring against Him? Uneasily they looked about them, in quest of witnesses who might accuse the silent One in their midst. But though one after another was hastily brought and questioned, not one was able to suggest an accusation, till finally, fearful, possibly lest, after all, they be cheated of the coveted excitement anticipated in the arrest and trial, two of the rabble pressed forward, falteringly proclaiming:

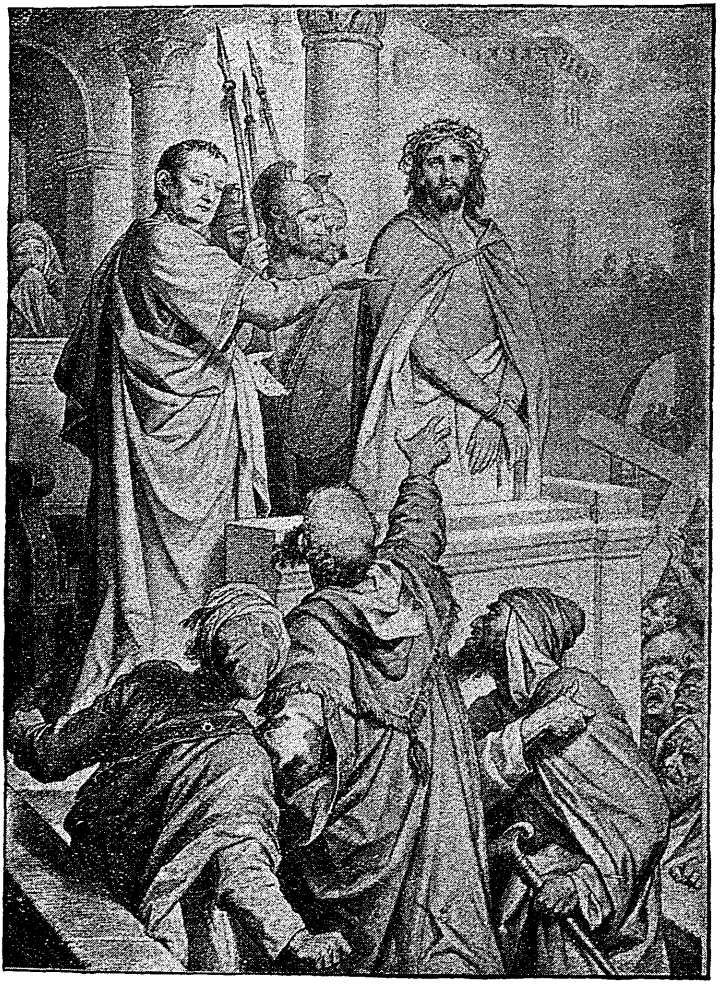
"We can testify to having heard this Fellow boast, 'I am able to destroy the Temple of God and to build it again in three days.'"

And perhaps to the minds of some of those present returned that scene of three years before, when those words, with their mystical meaning, fell from the lips of the young Reformer when, for the first time, He taught the reverence due His Father's House.

Lame, indeed, fell now the faltering accusation on the listening crowd. But since it was the only one ventured, with an attempted assumption of dignity befitting his office of Judge, the High Priest rose, and fixing his gaze on Jesus, asked authoritatively:

"Have you nothing to say? Nothing to answer for yourself in reply to the accusations you hear brought against you?"

The gaze was met by one unfathomable in its blended fearlessness, scorn and sadness, and that silence growing unbearable now in its immobility.



BEFORE CAIAPHAS.

Overcome with a sense of powerlessness without more tangible ground for accusation, and, perhaps, with one returning flash of nameless fear and conviction, the High Priest cried in piercing tones:

"I adjure Thee by the living God that Thou tell us whether Thou be the CHRIST, the Son of God!"

It was a demand that at once unsealed those silent lips. Never should such a plea remain unanswered; never this one last opportunity lost for the hardened hearts about Him. Fixing His gaze in its unequivocal truth on the eyes meeting His, clearly He answered:

"I am. And hereafter, you shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, coming in the clouds of Heaven!"

The momentary yielding of the proud heart had passed. Overcome with rage at the fearless answer, yet rejoiced that the coveted grounds for conviction were thus openly furnished, the High Priest tore his costly robe in anger and excitement, crying:

"What further need have we of witnesses? Have you not heard His blasphemy? What think you; what is your verdict?"

"Death! Death!" was the universal response. "He is guilty of death. Away with the blasphemer to Pilate!"

And with cruel buffetings, ignominious blows and revilings, they hurried Him forth from the council chamber, on to the Judgment Hall of Pontius Pilate, their Roman Governor.

Larger, more excited grew the crowd, as it threaded the darkened streets; and catching the spirit of that eager thirst for blood and violence, it was soon amid a throng of false and mercenary accusers that the

Prisoner stood, while around Him rose a tumult of false and foul accusations.

Yet silent, serene, and unresisting He stood, while strangely impressed by this marvellous bearing of One facing thus the issues of life and death, and irritated somewhat by this imperturbability, Pilate at last cried:

"Do You stand thus silent and indifferent before me? Know You not that I have power to crucify You, and power to release You?"

Meeting the imperious gaze with quiet dignity, calmly Jesus answered: "You could have no power whatever against Me, except it be permitted you from above."

The answer filled the haughty Roman with astonishment, not unmingled with admiration for the fearless One thus disdaining His foes. Turning now to the fierce accusers, sternly he declared:

"I find no fault whatever in this man worthy of death. Moreover, I learn He is of Galilee, of Herod's jurisdiction, not mine. Let Him, then, be taken before Herod."

"On to Herod!" arose the cry. And anon, before the dreaded tyrant they bore Him, who long had desired to see this Jesus of Nazareth, hoping to witness some astounding miracle. But though some such display of power might now have procured Him favor; yet here, even as before the Council, before Pilate, so, too, did Jesus now stand passive, silent, calmly awaiting the sentence He knew would come.

In vain they sought again to find occasion for condemnation. Not even for a tyrant's court could evidence be procured. And venting now their disappointment in bitter spleen, led on by the rude soldiers

of the palace, every insult, jibe and mockery was heaped on the unresisting One. Had He not proclaimed Himself a King? Then let Him wear the royal robe! And straightway arraying Him in mock splendor, while weaving a crown of plaited thorns about His brow, jeeringly they saluted Him: "Hail, King of the Jews!"

But time was pressing. Back to Pilate He must be led, and through means, fair or foul, the sentence for which they thirsted obtained before the morning. Once more, then, before the irritated Roman Governor they stood, crying:

"It is nothing less than treason to let this man go! Has He not openly declared Himself a King, thus provoking the people to insurrection? You are no friend to Cæsar if you release this disturber of the peace, regardless of our warning!"

Startled by this threatening cry, the new tone thus given the judicial charges, once more Pilate began the weary trial. More closely yet did he inquire into the accusations, the bitter invectives brought. But once again was he forced to declare: "No fault do I find in Him worthy of death. Let Him be scourged for His indiscretions, and let Him go!"

But even while the cruel lash fell on the bleeding shoulders, more and more insistently arose the cry which all through the night had been shouted at intervals, unchecked: "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!"

Even as Jesus Himself had foretold, His disciples, frightened and dismayed, had stood aloof, realizing their helplessness to defend Him, and knowing that a word from them would be sufficient to involve them in His fate. The three who had witnessed His arrest

had lingered alike about the house of the High Priest, and the Judgment Hall, but not daring to make known their connection with Him they followed.

Peter, however, had ever been a marked and notable member of that little band of close attendants on the Prophet of Nazareth. It was with the more danger, therefore, that he ventured on the scene of the trial. Nor did he escape. Three different times was he accosted, and the sharp accusation heard: "This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth." But each time, with a sudden overpowering access of fear, almost before he realized the cowardly perfidy toward the Master he had yesterday been proud to serve and acknowledge, Peter denied fiercely and bitterly the imputation.

The third time, pressed even more closely by threatening voices, the fear within him grew stronger yet, and with an oath upon his lips, he cried: "I know not the Man!"

To the ear of the lonely Prisoner at the bar that cruel denial reached. Turning silently, Jesus fixed His gaze on this His once bold friend; their eyes met, and in those of Jesus there was pain and anguish so deep that it pierced the heart of Peter as with an arrow. Just at that moment the cocks were uttering their signal for morning. Suddenly to the weak, but loving disciple, came like an echo his Master's words: "This night, Peter, ere the cock crow twice, you will have denied Me three times!"

Unable to bear alike the memories and remorse awakened by that tender glance, Peter rushed out into the darkness of the night, weeping bitterly.

Meanwhile, the weary mockery of trial had drawn

to its end. Fretted with the conflicting emotions constraining him, Pilate at last yielded to the mingled threats and demands of the fierce throng, and delivering the unresisting One into their hands, he said, in faltering tones:

"Take ye Him, and crucify Him. As for me, I hold myself innocent of the blood of this just One. See you to it."

"His blood be on us, and on our children!" was the answering shout. And with fierce, unseemly haste, they rushed to incur the awful accountability thus defiantly sought and accepted.

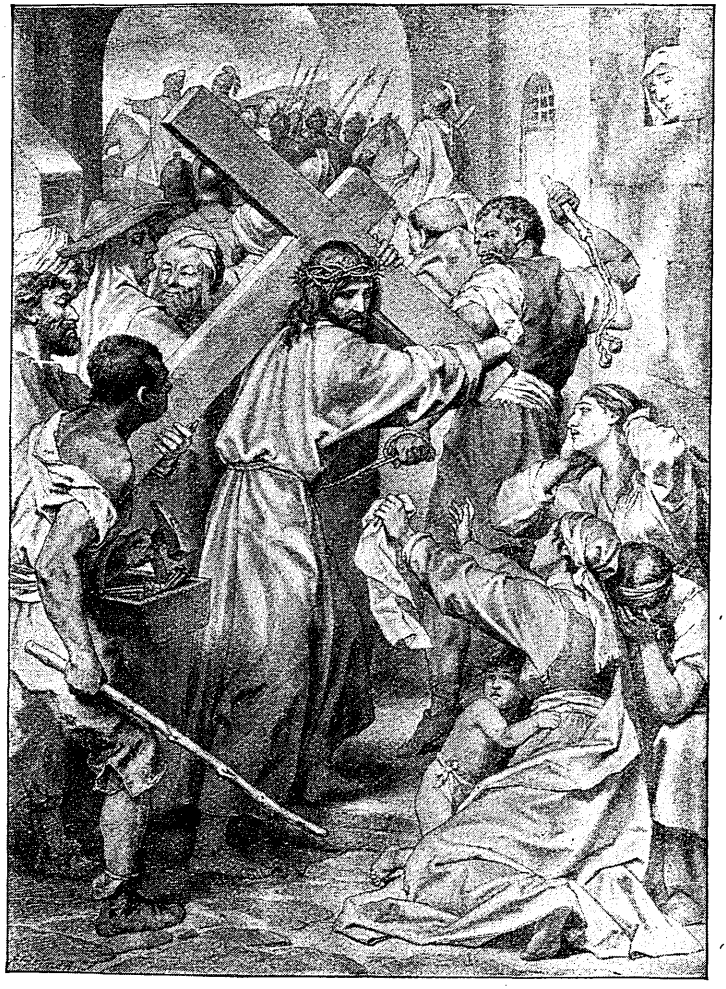
XL.

"It is Finished!"

THE mild night air had given place to the chill of early morning, when from one of the gates of Jerusalem issued a strangely impressive, strangely mingled, crowd.

Officers of the law, soldiers of every rank, men of all classes, from the high-born Pharisee to the lowliest peasant, were there; and, here and there, the draped figures of women clinging close—shrinking, as it were, in grief and terror; yet all constrained by some inward impulse to follow the impetuous, though slow-moving, throng.

In its midst, with head bowed low—though, in bitter irony, crowned—at last walked Jesus of Nazareth, wearily and slow. On His brow a coronet of thorns, on His bruised and bleeding shoulders the burden of a weighty cross!



ON TO CALVARY.

Yes, the relentless enemies who, for days and weeks, had plotted His destruction, were, at last, to work their cruel will, and He whom they had not dared take in the light of day, surrounded ever by grateful hearts sharing His ministries, was now, in the hush of early morning, being led forth to die; to be "lifted up," as He Himself had foretold, on the ignominious cross of shame!

Attended by all the ribald sounds, the jibes and jeers of human hearts under the influence of human nature's darkest passions, the motley procession moved on, wending its way to an eminence some distance from the city's gates, known as Mount Calvary—the spot where many a malefactor had paid sin's dread penalty—the place of public execution.

Slowly, but without interruption, the noisy cortege had proceeded; but now a halt was seen to be imperative. Though making no moan, uttering no complaint, the bowed One in their midst was sinking. All but exhausted by the night of torture, the frail human frame was fainting beneath the cruel weight laid upon it.

Halting suddenly, therefore, the officers in command looked about them. Then, summarily hailing a passer-by—a Cyrenian, gazing in compassion, perhaps, on the sorrowful scene approaching—on his strong shoulders was placed the heavy instrument of death.

Painfully Jesus raised His drooping figure, and, in the momentary pause, sudddenly the sound of woman's sorrow smote upon the ear.

In that crowd a mother's heart was breaking; and by her side walked many another whose sorrow He had healed, and who with her followed now the

gentle Jesus, weeping. The piteous sound, as ever, touched that compassionate Heart, and, turning now to those sobbing ones, with strangely impressive sadness He cried:

"Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for Me, but for yourselves and your children! Behold, the days will come in which it shall be said: 'Blessed are they who have brought no little ones into the world to meet the sorrows the day has brought!'"

It was the only break in the sad progress. Amid jeers and cruel taunts they brought Him at last to the mound of death. Here they erected the cross; and, that no ignominy be lacking, on either side rises a similar one, whereon, in writhing agony, soon appear the forms of two thieves, paying the penalty of their life of sin!

Between them, in silent agony, He, too, now hangs suspended—the sinless one. Above His head, in letters large and clear, His accusation—ah! is it not, rather, Heaven and earth's own proclamation:

"JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS!"

Around Him still throng the hooting, jeering crowd, led by His enemies, the very chief of that nation whose pride and glory He should have been!

"Come down from the cross, if You would have us now believe!" rises again and again the taunting cry. "He saved others; Himself He cannot save!" Ah! bitter thrust, indeed, this now His reproach—"He saved others!"

But, as He looks upon them from that altar-cross, suddenly from the lips of Jesus fell the wondrous words: "*Father, forgive them; they know not what they do!*"

The matchless prayer must have touched the hardened hearts beside Him; for, though, thus far, cries and imprecations had alone shouted the agony of the dying criminals at His side, one of them, now, in struggling tones of yearning faith and penitence, cried:

"Lord, remember me, when Thou comest into Thy kingdom!"

Instantly on the tortured soul fell the soothing answer:

"*Verily, this day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise!*"

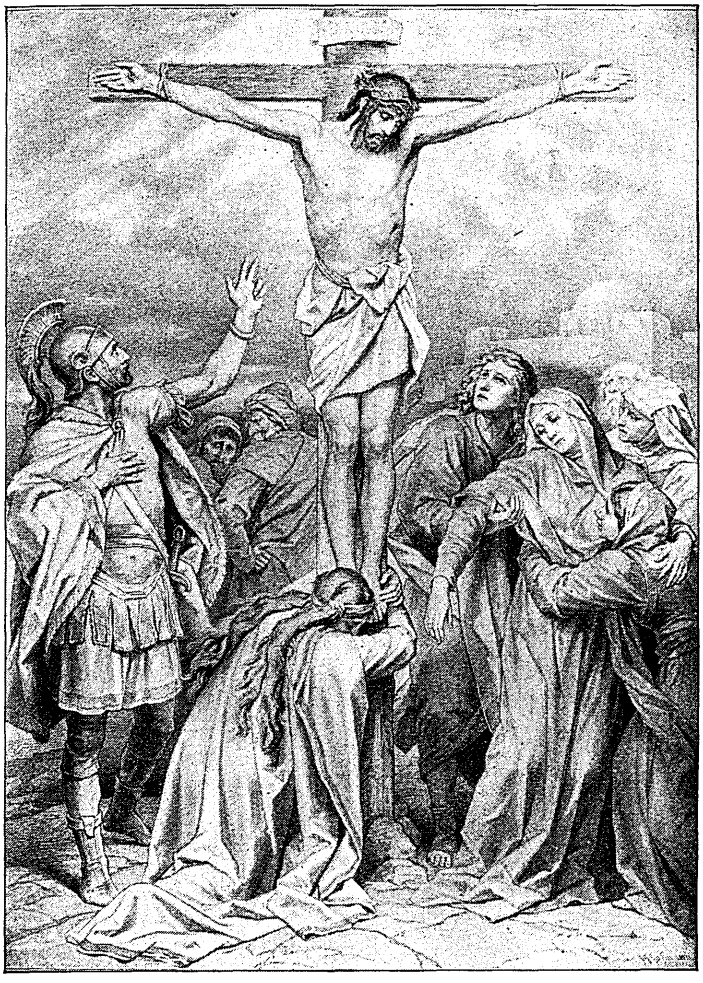
At the foot of the cross, no longer held aloof by fear or scorn, stood John, the beloved Disciple; at his side, clinging in unspeakable anguish, Mary, the stricken Mother. Many had been the sorrows of those years now gone; but now, at last, fell upon her heart the meaning of that prophecy startling her long since with its mystery of sorrow, those words uttered in the Temple, when this, her Son, but a babe, was dedicated to God: "A sword shall pierce thine own soul, also!"

But that Son was not to pass from her thus, unmindful of the filial care which, amid all the pressure of higher claims, had doubtless been ever near His heart. Looking now upon the two, as thus they stood with eyes upturned to His, with a glance from one to the other more than completing the brief behest, tenderly He said:

"*Woman, behold thy son!*"

Then to the trusted friend: "*Behold thy mother!*" A sacred bond which death alone should sever.

The awful day wore on. But now, just at the hot



THE CRUCIFIXION.

noon-tide hour, suddenly over the brilliancy of the sun, a darkness fell on all the land, enshrouding it in rayless gloom, dark as the doom of a hopeless world.

Startled silence, for a moment—then, amid that gloom, rising from the cross like the wail of a human heart breaking beneath its burden, broke the bitter cry:

"*My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me!*"

It was the voice of Him who had taken upon Himself the sins of the world.

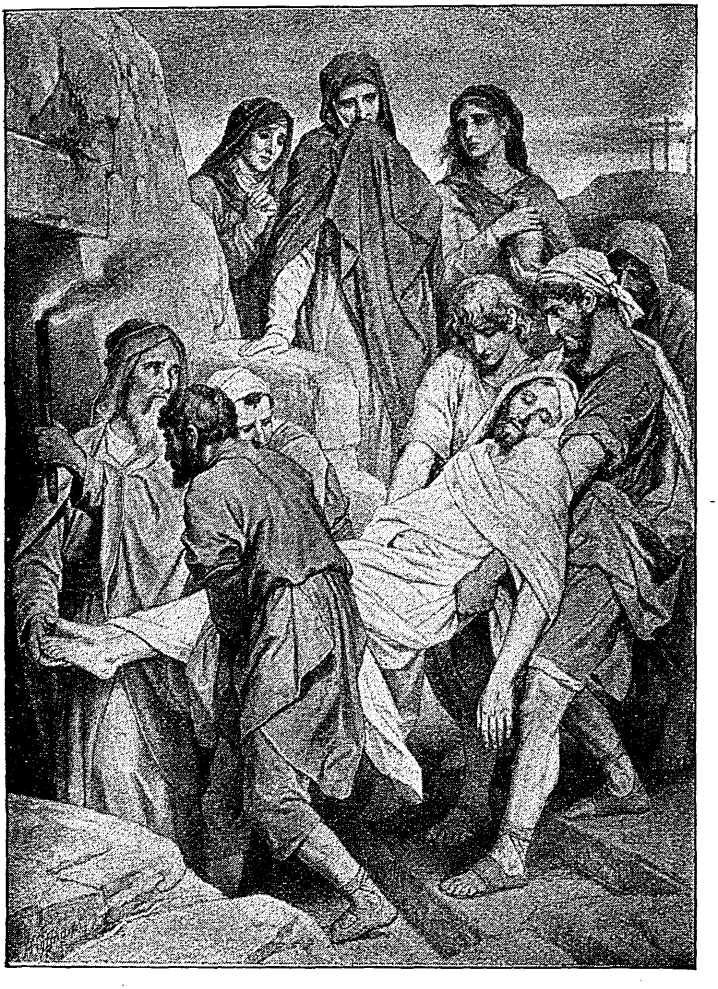
Greater still grew that human anguish, till from the parched lips—or was it the yearning heart?—came the sigh: "*I thirst!*"

Half in mockery, half in mercy, quickly a sponge, moistened with vinegar and gall, was uplifted, in response. Was the bitter gall of unrequited love to be His portion to the last?

Thus the slow hours dragged on, the noisy crowd having been awed, and, in a measure, dispersed, by that mysterious gloom. A silence, like brooding sorrow, rested over all. But suddenly, as the third hour past noon drew near, the strange cloud lifted; the sun, bright messenger of peace and hope, broke upon the gladdened earth, and, as though from that agonized One upon the cross had been lifted, likewise, the awful weight of a doom fulfilled, a cry rang forth, thrilling every ear with wonder! It was the cry of a victor, not a victim; the cry of victory, not defeat; and the very earth seemed quivering with the shout:

"IT IS FINISHED!"

Then, in lower tones of peace unutterable: "*Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit!*"



THE DESCENT FROM THE CROSS.

The next moment it was but a lifeless Body that hung before the startled throng!

"Surely He is not dead!" was the whispered comment of those appointed to watch the slow hours of agony; for on either side the distorted forms of the malefactors writhed yet in anguish.

"Bring hither thy spear," was the quick command to a soldier near; "make the work sure." The next instant, into that Heart which had throbbed only with love for man was thrust the cruel steel. From the riven side poured forth a stream of mingled blood and water!

The conflict, indeed, was ended. With the gathering shades of evening, loving ones drew near, and tenderly from the cross they lifted Him who so willingly thereon had yielded up His life for them He loved. Mary, the weeping Mother, and two other women who loved Him well, accompanied the little band of disciples bearing their precious Burden. At their head walked one who, withholding, perhaps, in life from the lowly Nazarene his love and homage, had yet begged from Pilate the privilege of claiming the bruised and broken Body, and to place it in his own new tomb—Joseph, a prominent and wealthy citizen of Arimathea. By his side, in tearful silence, walked Nicodemus, none other than that timid one who, daring not earlier to face a world's cold scorn, no longer hesitated now thus to proclaim his deep, if tardy, contrition.

In the rich and costly sepulchre, then, they laid Him;—He who in life had claimed no home. With costly perfumes, such as kings might value, was the worn Body embalmed, and wrapped in royal linen.

And He who in life had dwelt with the poor and lowly, slept now with the great and highest—as, in truth, befitted the Son of David!

But not yet was the malice of enemies satiated. Hastening to Pilate, pompously a committee from the Council announce:

"Sir, we remember, before His death this impostor declared He would rise again on the third day. Lest, now, in order to give credence to some such story, His disciples steal away the body by night, we ask that a guard be appointed till the third day, and authority be given us to place on the stone of the tomb the official seal."

With quiet contempt discernible in his tones, Pilate answered: "The guard is yours. Go your way; make all as secure as you can."

XLI.

DEATH'S CONQUEROR.

AGAIN it was early morning, and the whole earth was throbbing with the quickening pulse of fully awakening Spring.

But through the land of Judea, slowly spread the mournful tidings: "Jesus of Nazareth is dead!"

And if the hearts of them to whom He had but ministered were sad, what was the grief, the bitter despair of that little band which had staked their all, their every hope, on this, their Master, Israel's Messiah, the Son of God! There He slept, in the tomb where they had laid Him. Was this, indeed, the end? The fulfilment of all their hopes?

Be this as it might, there were loving hearts which would vent their sorrow only beside that fast closed tomb. With the Sabbath's strict observance ended, early on the morrow, that first day of the week, while yet but scarcely light, three of those same devoted women who had lingered last about the cross, started forth, laden with sweet spices, anew to embalm the resting place of Him they loved.

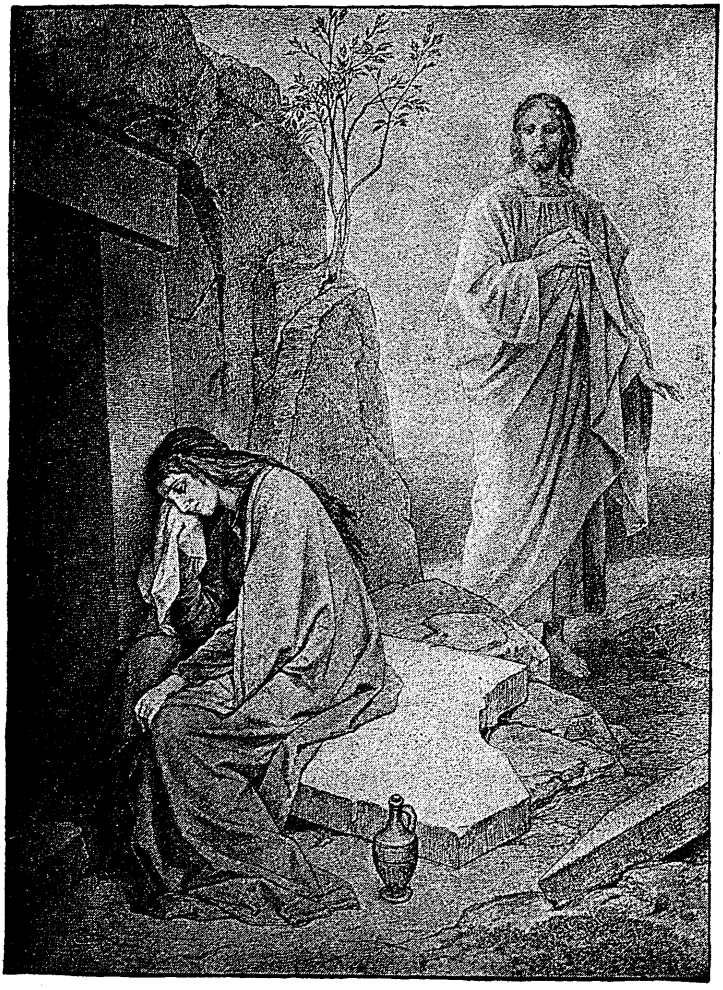
Among them was Mary of Magdala, more often called Mary Magdalene, one whose heart was bound to Jesus in ties of peculiar love and gratitude. As they pursued their way, sad and silent, she it was who wondered anxiously: "How shall we roll away the great stone which lies before the sepulchre?" All unconscious were they of the seal which jealous hands had placed upon it, of the guard of soldiers watching near.

But neither was aught of this visible, as they now approached.

As they entered the silent city of death, the morning sun just gilding its quiet homes, behold, the weighty stone already rolled away, and lo—they stand beside an empty tomb!

What could it mean! With strained eyes, and startled hearts they looked within the shadowy sepulchre. There alone lay the snowy cloth which had bound His brow, the linen shroud, discarded now, like broken fetters cast aside, lying idle, where He had lain!

Pausing not longer, amazed, distressed, away they sped. Back to the city in quest of wondering ears to hear their story; and finding quickly Peter and John,



AT THE EMPTY TOMB.

soon was the devoted Mary once more guiding them, in trembling haste to the Garden of Tombs.

Lo, it was no idle tale of woman's overwrought brain. Stooping with questioning hearts, scarce able to believe, the two whom she had brought looked also within that sepulchre, and could not speak for wonder! Empty, it lay before them, the burial cloths in silence folded; and these alone to tell where He they loved had slept!

Bewildered, perplexed, they turned away, bent, doubtless, on further inquiry, or consultation. But Mary, bereaved, and broken-hearted, stood weeping beside that empty tomb, in grief that could not be comforted. Even though sleeping among the dead, infinitely precious was that lifeless Body to her; all in all to her that Form once instinct with love so boundless. Therefore it was with a sense of new and deeper desolation that she cried: "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where to find Him!"

Some one was approaching. Gratefully upon her heart and ear fell the gentle words:

"Woman, why weepest thou; Whom seekest thou?"

Blinded by tears, distraught by sorrow, she had scarcely glanced at the One thus speaking. Supposing it was perhaps the gardener, or care-taker of the place, she only cried, in broken accents:

"O, Sir, if you have removed Him who slept here, tell me where you have laid Him, and I will take Him away!"

One word, like long remembered music, fell on her wondering ear:

"Mary!"

The word, the voice, penetrated heart and brain! One startled upward glance in to the eyes looking into hers, and with a cry of joy, awe, and wonder, she, too, uttered but one responsive word: "Rabboni!"—Master—while trembling she fell at the feet of Him who stood before her!

Yes, it was He, and yet He stood before her,—Jesus of Nazareth, Jesus, the crucified, now the living One! Speechless, bewildered, obeying only the ecstatic impulse of joy and love, eagerly she would have clasped her arms about Him, but that with gentle desistance, He spoke again:

"Not yet, Mary; touch Me not yet, for I have not yet ascended to My Father. But go to My brethren, My disciples, and tell them that I have risen, even as I foretold them."

The next moment He had left her; and obedient, as ever, to the gentle word of command, she sped away with throbbing heart, back to the disciples, bearing her wondrous tidings!

Is it strange that for very joy, very awe, and gladness, they found it difficult to believe the bewildering story? Eagerly they listened. But only when their own eyes should behold Him, their own hands touch and welcome Him, could they believe the One they had followed to the tomb had, indeed, risen from the dead!

Meanwhile, what of that official seal which to break or mar, unauthorized, was death? What of that mailed and armed guard that might not ease their weary watch with one hour's sleep, on penalty of death? What of these?

Ah, a strange, astounding story had, in all haste,

been borne to the palace of the High-priest, that morning early, at break of day.

"Hark ye!" had cried the commander of the guard: "This morning while yet the shadows of night still lingered, as we sat about the tomb you bade us watch, lo, with sudden thrill and quiver, the earth shook to its center! And as we gazed, in silent terror, out upon the dawn, gleamed soft a glorious light, and one in raiment white as snow, and countenance radiant, stood suddenly beside the tomb. One touch on the mighty stone, and trembling to its base, quivering it rolled aside; and forth from the tomb, like one refreshed from slumber, stood before us He who had lain within, Jesus of Nazareth, the crucified!"

Speechless with amazement, trembling with awe, the listeners heard. Could this, indeed, be true! Could those mysterious words so well remembered from the lips of that fearless One indeed have been fulfilled? But what must be done? The yet trembling and pallid witnesses before them bore evidence to the truth of the story related; none the less must it be treated as a myth, a fabulous invention.

Yet how account for the Body gone from its resting place? The empty tomb, the stone removed?

Holding a hurried council, in haste they returned again to the soldiers, displaying, even as they came, a purse of glittering coins.

"Repeat to no one," they whispered in persuasive command, "that which you have told to us. Let it be understood, rather, that while you slept, unsuspicious of danger, disciples came by night, and stole the Body of this their Master. Should it come to the

Governor's ear, we will vouch for it that you shall be protected."

This, then, was the story soon afloat. But in the city of Jerusalem, that day, were hearts in which glowed the struggling gleams of a hope new-born, of a gladness vague, but yearning.

XLII.

In Glory Everlasting.

IT was the evening of that first day of the week, that Sunday, the early morning of which had brought to the disciples of Jesus of Nazareth the thrilling tidings that He, their Master, had risen from the dead!

All day long, in groups of two and three, they had met, to discuss with conflicting emotions the glad, but bewildering story. How could it be! An event so startling, a manifestation of power and truth which should be to mankind God's crowning revelation—that such a truth should dawn upon the world in this quiet way, like the dawn, indeed, scattering the darkness with silent, yet invincible power!

Yet, had it not been thus with all the revelations of God through Him who had declared Himself His Son, the Christ? Was it not in the hush of midnight stillness, and the lowliness of a village inn that man's Redeemer had come into the world? Was it not in the darkness and seclusion of night, and to but three chosen witnesses, that the majesty of His glory had been revealed, as He communed with shining ones from Heaven? Was it not in the quiet sanctity of that

upper chamber, and to His little flock alone, that had been revealed the mystical meaning of the Passover Feast, enfolding the fulfilment of man's redemption? And now, should the message thrilling anew those hearts be true, would it not but be in the beautiful order of these kindred revelations, coming thus upon the world in the hush of dawn, itself a dawn, to deepen more and more to perfect day!

But all as yet was dim and uncertain to their struggling faith.

With the evening, ten of that little band of twelve had assembled in a secluded upper room, the very room, perhaps, in which had been passed that last sad evening with Him they mourned. Judas was not with them. Alas! like that shining one of old falling from the heights of Heaven's glory to hell's abyss, so, too, he who had been the chosen friend of the Son of God had fallen to the lowest depths of sin. Yet even here had he but believed, would the hand betrayed have been stretched forth to save. To the despairing heart came no such remembrance of mercy; and yielding to the frenzy of a soul's remorse, the unhappy one had sought atonement in his own wretched blood.

Therefore, there were but eleven of that chosen band, and one of these was absent, Thomas, that loyal one, once so ready to declare his willingness to die with the Master. But that Master had died alone. He could not bring himself now to believe the marvellous story which declared Him risen from the dead. Surrendering himself to the hopelessness of disappointment and grief, which upon his own, as upon the hearts of his companions had fallen, despairingly he had answered:

THE ASCENSION.

"No; except I see in His hands the print of those nails I myself saw driven there, and put my finger in the print of those nails, and my hand within His pierced side, I will not believe!"

It was in this spirit of hopeless unbelief, doubtless, that he was now absenting himself from the little assembly. And great, indeed, was his loss. As thus they sat, in wistful silence, or yearning interchange of hopes and fears, suddenly—entering they saw not, knew not how—behold, Jesus, their Master, in their midst! And breaking the silence, from the lips of the voice they knew so well, fell the sweet salutation: "Peace be unto you!"

It is not strange that for the moment they were motionless, scarce breathing, with the very tumult of joy and awe surging through heart and brain. Readily comprehending the emotions thus overwhelming them, with the loving sympathy of old, Jesus spoke again:

"Why are ye troubled, and why do doubts and fears bewilder your hearts? See, behold My hands and feet. It is I Myself who am again with you. Handle Me, and see for yourselves. A spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have!"

As He spoke, before their straining eyes, He held those hands bearing still, only too plainly, the marks of the nails which had pierced them; each sandaled foot bearing the same sad token.

Then, as with unspeakable joy, they crowded about Him, once more with loving tenderness, He breathed that quieting salutation: "Peace be unto you!" and in tones growing ever more familiar, He talked with them as of old.

"Has it not all come to pass," He said, "even as I foretold you? All things written concerning Me in the Word of God, must needs be fulfilled; and is it not there written that Christ must suffer, die, and rise again, for man's redemption? Now then," He continued with impressive earnestness, "even as I was sent into the world to accomplish these things, so send I you, as My witnesses of the same, to all nations, beginning here, at Jesusalem."

Glad beyond expression were the hearts gathered thus about the beloved Master, as of old, looking once again into the tender eyes, drinking in once more the words falling from His lips. Even yet the gladness and wonder of it all seemed more than they could grasp. Yet was not this too the fulfilment of His own words? Had He not Himself declared: "Your sorrow shall be turned into joy?" Fully, indeed, were they now realizing that tender prediction. Nor was it as they feared, immediately to be taken from them again.

On the following Sunday evening, again were they assembled, and Thomas, only too eager now to share the blessed assurance and joy of his companions, was with them. And again, unannounced, His approach unseen, Jesus once more stood among them, breathing the welcome greeting: "Peace be unto you!"

A moment later, He had fixed His gaze sadly on Thomas, and in tones marked by tender reproach, He said gently:

"Reach hither thy finger, Thomas, and behold My hands; in My riven side thrust now thy hand; and be not faithless, but believing."

With compunction such as they only can know whose trust shines forth too late, the repentant disciple fell at his Master's feet, with the adoring cry of transcendent faith:

"My Lord and My God!"

"Having seen Me, thou now believest, Thomas;" said Jesus, gravely. "Blessed are they who having not seen, yet believe!"

Forevermore all fear, all misgivings had vanished. But not even yet was the beloved One, so lately restored to the little band, at once to leave them. Forty memorable days were yet to be theirs, days in which they were to enjoy exclusively the companionship so dear to them. Not again did Jesus resume His public ministry. That work was ended. It now but remained to prepare more fully these, His chosen witnesses and Apostles, for the great work soon to be committed to them.

It could not have been with other than keen humiliation and distress that Peter, true and deep as had been his contrition, met for the first time those eyes which, in their anguished reproach, had looked their last upon him, in the hour of bitter trial.

Yet not one word of that reproach clouded his joy as he met again his risen Lord. Not until later, and but once, was that three-fold denial brought to his remembrance.

It was while unfolding to these, His under-shepherds, the trust soon to be confided to their keeping, that Jesus said suddenly:

"Simon Peter, lovest thou Me?"

The eager heart more than ever responsive to its

Master's touch, answered quickly: "Yes, Lord, surely Thou knowest that I love Thee!"

Impressively Jesus answered: "Feed My lambs!"

Once again, and yet the third time, that tender query: "Simon Peter, lovest thou Me?" to which, in tones of deepening pain and consciousness, the disciple could only murmur humbly: "Yes, Lord. Thou who knowest all things, must know that I love Thee!" And each time had been returned the same fervent command: "Feed, then, My sheep; feed My lambs."

Thus the brief weeks, never to be forgotten by that favored circle, passed quickly by, and nearer came the day which was to be yet more memorable, more indelibly engraved on heart and mind.

It was near beloved Bethany, where, perhaps, Jesus may quietly have communed more than once with the friends He loved so well, and the Mother whose sorrow had given place to joy so deep and abiding.

Here it was, to a quiet spot on green Mt. Olivet, that for the last time He led His little flock, and where, gathering them closer about Him, He looked upon them in unutterable tenderness, while with the fervor of words for the last time repeated, He said:

"Behold, I now go from you; but all power is Mine, in Heaven and earth. Go you, therefore, unto all nations, teaching them to observe all things whatever I have commanded you. And lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world!"

They were the Master's last words to His appointed Messengers.

Even as they thus stood about Him, suddenly a cloud of strange, unearthly brightness hovered above them. Closer it drew, enveloping them, as it seemed, in its luminous glory; and even as they gazed with eyes full of vague dread and yearning on the beloved One in their midst, slowly He rose, uplifted, as it were, amid that cloud enfolding Him in its mystic veil, and with hands outstretched in a benediction too fervent for words, He went from them!

His earthly work was ended. And while the everlasting hills were yet echoing that triumphant cry: "IT IS FINISHED," the courts of Heaven were ringing with the pæan: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of Glory shall come in!" Jesus of Nazareth, Son of God and Son of man, had ascended to His Father in Heaven, there to reign in glory everlasting!

THE END.

APPENDIX.

PREFACE TO APPENDIX.

The following Lessons are not confined to the scope of the foregoing Narrative. They comprise a complete though concise study of the Gospel, with such reference to the Old Testament as suggested by events related to that portion of Scripture. As a supplement, however, to the Narrative as recorded, they will be found doubly valuable and interesting, supplying facts therein omitted, and additional details to those narrated.

Even more carefully than in the Story, has the chronological sequence of events accepted by the best authorities been followed. This will explain otherwise apparently abrupt breaks here and there in the order of reference directing the student not unfrequently from the study of a given chapter to scenes and occurrences totally different. Occasionally, moreover, such alternations are due to the fact that though arriving at a certain point under the guidance of one Evangelist, a fuller or more instructive account of the event recorded may be offered by another; in which case, reference is directed to the latter.

As will be seen, effort has been made throughout to bring to view not only the prominent works, but also the more impressive Words of the great Teacher and Saviour of man, since only as studied thus, in close connection, is the truest benefit derived from both.

APPENDIX.

LESSONS ON THE WORDS AND WORKS OF JESUS.

CHAPTER I.

What provinces of Palestine are mentioned in the Gospel record? St. Matthew ii. 1; St. Mark i. 14; St. John iv. 5.

Which was the largest and most important? St. Mark i. 5.

What towns of Galilee are mentioned in addition to Nazareth? St. Matthew iv. 13, xi. 21; St. John ii, 1.

To what foreign power was Palestine subject at the time of Christ? St. Luke ii. 1.

Who was the local sovereign of Judea? St. Luke i. 5.

Who was serving as High Priest of the Jews? St. Luke i. 5, 8.

How many generations are recorded between David and Joseph the betrothed husband of Mary? St. Matthew I. 6-16.

Of what tribe were both he and Mary? I. Chronicles ii 3-15.

What had been one of the earliest prophecies concerning this tribe? Genesis xlix. 10.

What had been the solemn promise of God to David? II. Samuel vii. 16.

Why is Joseph's descent recorded rather than Mary's?

For the reason, doubtless, that genealogical records were preserved in the male lines only; and in foreknowledge of the fact that only through Joseph would Jesus be accorded His claim as "The Son of David." St. Luke iv. 22.

II.

Where are we told of man's original relation to God? Genesis i. 26, 27; St. Luke iii. 33.

Where the loss of that relation? Genesis iii. 17-19.

What of man's condition in consequence? Romans v. 12.

What was the earliest promise given fallen man? Genesis iii. 15.

What race had early been chosen as the special People of God, and through whom this promise should be accomplished? Exodus xix. 3-6; Genesis xxii. 18.

By what name was that nation now known? St. John iv. 22.

What period of time had elapsed since that promise? About 4,000 years.

What had become the great centre of the knowledge and worship of God? II. Chronicles vi. 6; St. Luke iii. 41.

With what places of local worship were distant communities supplied? St. Luke iv. 15.

What was a marked feature of the synagogue service? St. Luke iv. 16.

With what, therefore, were the Jewish people ever familiar? St. John v. 39.

III.

What had been one of the specific promises relating to the Saviour who should come into the world? Isaiah vii. 14.

To whom had this promise been directly addressed? Isaiah vii. 13.

How long before the Gospel date had this promise been given? About 700 years.

Who was sent as the messenger of its fulfilment? St. Luke i. 26.

Where do we find an earlier visit of this messenger recorded? Daniel viii. 16.

How long previous had this been? About 500 years.

Where and when had the visit to which he himself refers occurred? St. Luke i. 8, 11, 26.

What evidence had been given Zacharias of the power of God? St. Luke i. 20.

In the observance of what great day was he probably engaged at the time of the message? Leviticus xvi. 33, xxiii. 27; St. Luke i. 9, 10.

On what date do the records of the time indicate that this day occurred that year? September 23.

On what date, then, probably occurred the birth of the child promised? June 24.

What Festival of the Church is observed on this day? St. John the Baptist's Day.

What promise had long since been given in close connection with the coming of the Saviour? Malachi iii. 1.

IV.

By whom had the Angel declared the message to Mary should be accomplished? St. Luke i. 35.

What was Mary's answer? St. Luke i. 38.

How was Joseph affected by the events that followed? St. Matthew i. 19.

What city had long been the residence of many of the priestly descendants of Aaron? Joshua xxi. 13.

Who were probably dwelling there at this time? St. Luke i. 5.

About what distance was it from Jernsalem? About eleven miles.

With what emotions did Elizabeth greet the visitor who now came to her? St. Luke i. 41-45.

Where do we find an earlier maternal song typical of Mary's? I. Samuel ii. 1-10.

How long did Mary sojourn in the house of Zacharias? St. Luke i. 56.

What incident is related in connection with the birth of the promised Child? St. Luke i. 59-63.

To what prophetic hymn did Zacharias give utterance? St. Luke i. 67-79.

By whom had Joseph's doubt of Mary been removed? St. Matthew i. 20.

How did he now evince his trust and affection? St. Matthew i. 24.

V.

What decree was issued by the Roman Emperor at this time? St. Luke ii. 1.

Where is found the earliest mention of the town of Bethlehem? Genesis xxxv. 16; Ruth i. 1.

In what connection occurs later mention of it? I. Samuel xvi. 1-18, xx. 6.

Where the last mention in the Old Testament? Micah v. 2.

What title still adhered to it in the days of Mary and Joseph? St. Luke ii. 4.

What necessitated their journey thither? St. Luke ii. 4.

What great event there occurred? St. Luke ii. 6, 7.

By what was it followed? St. Luke ii. 21.

When had the rite thus observed been established? Genesis xvii. 10.

What other ordinance was still observed by the people of God at this time? St. Luke ii. 22, 23.

What striking incident is here related? St. Luke i. 25–38.

What prophecy was fulfilled in this appearance of the Infant Christ in the Temple? Malachi iii. 1.

VI.

What name was applied by the Jews to all people apart from the chosen race? St. John vii. 35.

What prophecy had long since been uttered concerning Christ and the Gentiles? Isaiah xlix. 6, lx. 3.

What earlier prophecy had testified of Christ as a Star? Numbers xxiv. 17.

What occurrence now recalled this prophecy? St. Matthew ii. 1, 2.

Whence had these seekers of Christ come? From some Eastern country; probably Arabia.

Where were Mary and Joseph still sojourning? St. Matthew, ii. 1, 2.

What prophecy was most strikingly fulfilled in that which followed? Isaiah lx. 3, 6.

What message now came to Joseph? St. Matthew ii. 13.

What prophecy had long before associated the country into which He was now taken with the history of Christ? Hosea xi. 1.

What vague prophecy had been uttered concerning Bethlehem? Jeremiah xxxi. 15.

How was this prophecy now fulfilled? St. Matthew ii. 16.

VII.

Under what circumstances did Mary and Joseph return to Palestine? St. Matthew ii. 19–21.

Where did they again take up their residence? St. Matthew ii. 22, 23.

To what epithet did this step expose Jesus later? St. Matthew ii. 23.

How had this title been used formerly, and with what signification? Judges xiii. 5.

What characters of old, typical of Christ, had borne it? Judges xiii. 7; I. Samuel i. 11, 20.

What was the occasion of Jesus' first visit to Jerusalem after His infancy? St. Luke ii. 41.

When, and in commemoration of what event, had this Feast been instituted? Exodus xii. 3-17.

Where was it now alone celebrated? St. Luke ii. 41.

What command existed regarding its observance by members of the Church of Israel? Deuteronomy xvi. 16.

What notable occurrence is related of this visit of Jesus to Jerusalem? St. Luke ii. 43-49.

As what did He here again strikingly reveal Himself? St. John i. 1.

In what words did He reveal, for the first time, His knowledge of His true Nature and Mission? St. Luke ii. 49.

Which of the learned men present, probably, at that time, is mentioned later by name? Acts v. 34.

VIII.

For the return of what Prophet had the Jews long looked? Malachi iv. 5.

Who now suddenly appeared as the Messenger of God? St. Matthew iii. 1.

Where had his dwelling-place long been? St. Matthew iii. 1.

Where, and what, was the wilderness here and elsewhere mentioned? A barren district of country lying a short distance to the East of Jerusalem.

By whom had the coming of this wilderness Messenger been foretold? Malachi iii. 1; Isaiah xl. 3.

At what spot did he appear? St. John i. 28.

What was the age of John at this time? St. Luke i. 36, iv. 23.

What was the message proclaimed by John? St. Matthew iii. 1, 2, 3.

Of what did he warn the Jews in particular? St. Matthew iii. 9.

What did he demand as the pledge of repentance? St. Matthew iii. 8.

What was then further required? St. Matthew iii. 6.

What, however, did he declare concerning the rite thus administered? St. Matthew iii. 11.

IX.

Where do we find recorded God's earliest Covenant with His chosen race? Genesis xvii. 1–8.

What had been the seal of this Covenant? Genesis xvii. 10.

What had now long been foretold? Jeremiah xxxi. 31.

Who had been foretold should be the Messenger of this Covenant? Malachi iii. 1.

What was to be one of the features of the new Covenant? Joel ii. 28.

What was to be the seal of the New Covenant? St. Matthew iii. 11.

By whom now was this to be made manifest? St. Matthew iii. 13–16.

What protest did St. John Baptist offer? St. Matthew iii. 14.

What was Jesus' reply. St. Matthew iii. 15.

What manifestation of the Trinity signalized this event? St. Matthew iii. 16.

What had been St. John's exclamation on first beholding Jesus? St. John i. 29.

What had ever been the central feature of man's appeal to God for the forgiveness of sin? Genesis iv. 4; Leviticus i. 2.

Where do we find first mention of a lamb as specified for this purpose? Genesis xxii. 7.

Who had long since spoken of Christ as fulfilling the words now spoken by St. John? Isaiah liii. 7.

X.

Where do we find in Scripture earliest mention of Satan, and under what form? Genesis iii. 1; ii. Corinthians xi. 3.

What intimation is given us, later, regarding his origin, from the lips of Jesus? St. Luke x. 18.

What by St. Peter? II. St. Peter ii. 4.

In what do we find him first engaged on earth? Genesis iii.

What is now seen as his great purpose? St. Matthew iv. 1.

What would have been the consequence to man, had this purpose succeeded? The great plan of man's redemption would have been frustrated.

With what did Jesus defend Himself in this encounter? Ephesians vi. 17.

Where do we find recorded the words of His first answer? Deuteronomy viii. 3.

Where those of the Second? Deuteronomy vi. 16.

Where the third? Deuteronomy vi. 13.

Of What was Jesus thus again proving Himself the living Embodiment? St. John i. 1.

XI.

To what province did Jesus return after His sojourn in the wilderness? St. John ii. 1.

What disciples were early called to follow Him? St. John i. 37-43.

Which of the two thus called hastened to bring others? St. John i. 40, 44, 45.

What additional name was given one, and what its signification? St. John i. 42.

What declaration was made by one when calling his brother? St.

Which of these words evinced ignorance as yet concerning the true Nature of Jesus? St. John i. 45.

In what was found a serious obstacle to belief? St. John i. 46.

Whence was Messiah expected to appear? St. Matthew ii. 5, 6.

What glowing acknowledgment nevertheless followed the doubt thus expressed? St. John i. 49.

What reply was returned? St. John i. 50, 51.

To what scene did these words probably have reference? Acts i. 10.

Where and under what circumstances occurred the first manifestation of the divine power dwelling with Jesus in His human form? St. John ii. 1-11.

XII.

Where does Jesus next appear thus early in His ministry? St. John ii. 13.

What notable occurrence there took place? St. John ii. 14-16.

What prophecy was recalled by the act thus recorded? St. John ii. 17.

By whom had this prophecy been uttered? Psalms lxix. 9.

When were words spoken by Jesus on this occasion recalled and comprehended by His disciples? St. John ii. 22.

In what words is revealed the knowledge of Jesus of the human heart? St. John ii. 23.

What words foreshadow a later declaration? St. John ii, 19; St. Matthew xii. 6.

What Scriptural statement regarding the body is also confirmed by the words of Jesus? 1 Corinthians iii. 16.

By whom, and in what words had a "Tabernacle" such as Jesus referred to been early foretold? Isaiah xxxiii. 20.

XIII.

Through what was the divine power of Jesus now being recognized? St. John iii. 2.

By whom was this power now acknowledged? St. John iii. 1, 2.

Where may be found recorded the striking incident referred to in this interview?

By whom had the means of salvation there mentioned been offered? St. John iii. 14.

Who was now to be this Means itself? St. John iii. 14.

What declaration was made by Jesus regarding His Mission? St. John iii.

What did He declare man's condemnation? St. John iii. 19.

With whose work did that of Jesus now seem to conflict? St. John iii. 23.

What testimony of Christ was again delivered? St. John iii. 27-36.

What fulfilment of the words of John could be already seen? St. John iv. 1.

Where did Jesus now direct His steps? St. John iv. 3.

Through what section of country did His journey lay, and what the feeling between its inhabitants and those of Judea? St. John iv. 4, 9.

In the incident that followed, what declaration was made regarding the chosen race? St. John iv. 22.

By what revelation was this statement followed? St. John iv. 23.

XIV.

At what Feast succeeding that of the Passover was Jesus again found? St. John v. 1; Leviticus xxiii. 10.

By what two names was this Feast known? Deuteronomy xvi. 16; Acts ii. 1.

What notable miracle is recorded in connection with this visit to Jerusalem? St. John v. 2-9.

What feature of it was made the pretext for denunciation on the part of the Jews? St. John v. 10.

What outbreak followed? St. John v. 16.

To what declaration from Jesus did this lead? St. John v. 17.

What was the effect of the words thus uttered? St. John v. 17.

What fuller revelation of Himself did Jesus now make? St. John v. 19-23.

What blessed assurance is given the believers on Christ? St. John v. 24.

What solemn declaration concerning the future? St. John v. 28, 29.

By whom was it declared the Jews shall find themselves accused at the Day of Judgment? St. John v. 45.

What impressive statement follows? St. John v. 46, 47.

XV.

By what three names was a body of water frequently mentioned in the Gospel variously known? St. John vi. 1; St. Luke v. 1.

What cities are mentioned as situated on this lake? St. Matthew iv. 13; St. John vi. 1, 23; St. Mark vi. 45, viii. 10.

To what town did Jesus now go on His return to Galilee? St. Luke iv. 16.

What there occurred? St. Luke iv. 16-30.

Where may the words which served as a text on that occasion be found?

What incidents of the Old Testament occur in the sermon recorded? St. Luke iv. 25-27.

To what city did Jesus go on leaving Nazareth? St. Luke iv. 31.

What notable acknowledgment of His Divine Nature and Mission there occurred? St. Luke iv. 33, 34, 41.

What miracle is recorded in connection with this visit? St. Luke iv. 38, 39.

To what province did Jesus, for a time, now confine His ministry? St. Luke iv. 44.

XVI.

By what name is the longest and most notable sermon of Jesus generally known? "The Sermon on the Mount."

Where is this sermon recorded? St. Matthew v., vi., vii.

What are regarded as some of its most notable words? St. Matthew v. 3-11.

What impressive declaration occurs in this discourse? St. Matthew v. 17.

What portion of it is more universally known, probably, than any words of the Bible? St. Matthew v. 9-13.

By what miracle was this discourse followed? St. Matthew viii. 2, 3.

What miracle soon after again aroused the animosity of the enemies of Jesus? St. Matthew ix. 1-6.

What was the effect produced on the multitude who witnessed it? St. Matthew ix. 8.

How was offence further given in connection with the observance of the Sabbath? St. Matthew xii. 1, 2, 10-13.

What declaration was made by Jesus in reply? St. Matthew xii. 8.

What was the result of the animosity thus aroused? St. Matthew xii. 14.

By what was the growing popularity of His work indicated? St. Mark iii. 6-12.

Who had now been chosen as constant companions and witnesses of His works? St. Luke vi. 13-19.

XVII.

What interesting instance of appeal and help do we find recorded? St. Luke vii. 1-10.

Of what nation probably was the suppliant, and what the significance of his title?

How had he endeared himself to the community in which he lived? St. Luke vii. 5.

What characteristics manifest themselves in his appeal to Jesus? St. Luke vii. 6, 7.

What high commendation did they elicit? St. Luke vii. 9.

At what city do we next find Jesus? St. Luke vii. 11.

What wonderful manifestation of divine power here occurred? St. Luke vii. 12-15.

From what mention is inferred the prominence of the funeral thus met? St. Luke vii. 12.

What was the effect of this miracle on those who witnessed it? St. Luke vii. 16, 17.

XVIII.

What sad interruption had now come to the work of St. John the Baptist? St. Mark vi. 17.

How had he incurred the enmity of the tyrant thus afflicting him? St. Mark vi. 18.

What Herod was this? Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great, and holding the office of Tetrarch of Galilee? St. Luke iii. 19.

What two commandments had he openly broken? Exodus xx. 14-17.

What is mentioned as the climax of his iniquity? St. Luke iii. 20.

What message was now brought to Jesus? St. Luke vii. 19-20.

How was the message answered? St. Luke vii. 21, 22.

Where do we find foretold the works here recorded as manifestations of Christ?

What did Jesus now openly declare of John? St. Luke vii. 26, 27.

What had been the effect of John's life and words even on the wicked Herod? St. Mark vi. 20.

Under what circumstances was his great career at last ended? St. Mark vi. 19-29.

XIX.

How did Jesus continue to spread abroad the message of salvation? St. Luke viii. 1.

By whom was He constantly attended in His ministry? St. Luke viii. 1.

What women are mentioned by name as among His disciples? St. Luke viii. 2, 3.

What impressive parable was narrated by Jesus at this time? St. Luke viii. 4–8.

By whom had this form of instruction long since been foretold? Psalms lxxviii. 2; St. Matthew xiii. 35.

What did Jesus declare concerning many who came to hear Him? St. Matthew xiii. 15.

What parable did He next deliver? St. Matthew xiii. 24–30.

What others followed? St. Matthew xiii. 31, 32, 33, 44, 45, 47.

To what did each and all these parables relate? See beginning of each.

Where was Jesus as He delivered these parables? St. Matthew xiii. 1, 2.

XX.

Where do we next find Jesus? St. Luke viii. 26.

What notable miracle followed His arrival? St. Luke viii. 27–34.

What request was preferred by the man restored? St. Luke viii. 38.

What mission was appointed him instead? St. Luke viii. 38, 39.

How did he obey, and with what result? St. Luke viii. 39, 40.

Where did Jesus now return? St. Matthew ix. 1.

What was the city thus designated? St. Matthew iv. 13.

Who are here mentioned as sharing His companionship? St. Matthew ix. 10.

By whom was this rebuked? St. Matthew ix. 11.

What answer was returned by Jesus? St. Matthew ix. 12, 13.

What inquiry was also made by the disciples of St. John Baptist? St. Matthew ix. 14.

What words were recalled to them by the answer of Jesus? St. John iii. 29; St. Matthew ix. 15, 16.

What notable miracles are recorded at this time? St. Luke viii. 41–56.

XXI.

What fact concerning the human descent of Jesus had now evidently become known? St. Matthew ix. 27.

Through whom, however, was it doubtless traced? St. Luke iv. 22.

What feeling did the distinction thus accorded excite among His enemies? Naturally increased jealousy and hatred.

To what imputation were they at last incited by the unanswerable power of His works? St. Matthew ix. 34.

In what stronger language was the same accusation repeated? St. Matt. xii. 24.

Whom had Jesus ever declared the author of His words and works? St. Matthew xii. 28.

What fearful sin was therefore committed in the charge thus brought against Him? St. Matthew xii. 31, 32.

How did Jesus continue to manifest His unabated love and power? St. Matthew ix. 35.

As what did He regard the multitudes thronging His steps? St. Matthew ix. 36.

For what did He bid His disciples pray? St. Matthew ix. 37, 38.

Where did He now once more carry His ministry? St. Matthew xiii. 54.

Why was He still rejected by those to whom He ministered? St. Matthew xiii. 55-57.

Why were His greater works withheld from them? St. Matthew xiii. 58.

XXII.

What was now done by Jesus for the extension of His work among mankind? St. Matthew x. 1.

To what great work were the Twelve appointed? St. Matthew x. 5-8.

To whom for the time was their mission to be confined? St. Matthew x. 5, 6.

What was the message entrusted to them? St. Matthew x. 7.

What their work? St. Matthew x. 8.

What was declared concerning those by whom the messengers thus sent should be rejected? St. Matthew x. 15.

What was foretold concerning the more extended work for which the Apostles were now being prepared? St. Matthew x. 16-22.

What sad intelligence was soon after this brought to Jesus? St. Matthew xiv. 10-12.

Where did He seek a brief retirement? St. Matthew xiv. 13.

By whom was He followed? St. Matthew xiv. 13, 14.

How were they received? St. Matthew xiv. 14

XXIII.

What brief record is given concerning the Mission on which the Apostles had been sent? St. Mark vi. 12, 13.

To whom did they bring their report, and with what suggestion was it followed? St. Mark vi. 30-32.

By what was the hoped-for privacy interrupted? St. Mark vi. 33.

In what spirit was the multitude received? St. Mark vi. 34.

By what marvellous miracle was this occasion noted? St. Mark vi. 35-44.

What was the size of the crowd, and what the supply of food at command? St. Mark vi. 44, 38.

What declaration did this miracle evoke? St. John vi. 14.

To what prophecy had these words reference? Deuteronomy xviii, 15.

What eager determination attended the enthusiasm thus excited? St. John vi. 15.

How was this purpose averted? St. John vi. 15.

By what further manifestation of divine power was this incident followed? St. Matthew xiv. 23-32.

To what renewed confession were the witnesses moved? St. Matthew xiv. 33.

XXIV.

By whom, and with what inquiry, was Jesus met when arriving on the further side of the lake after the incidents just recorded? St. John vi. 22-25.

To what rebuke was He moved on seeing the multitude? St. John vi. 26, 27.

What memorable discourse marked this occasion? St. John vi. 29-65.

What was the great theme and revelation of this discourse? St. John vi. 51, 53, 56.

What was the effect of the revelation thus made? St. John vi. 60, 66

What question was asked by Jesus of His Apostles, and with what answer? St. John vi. 67–69.

With what sad reflection were the words received? St. John vi. 70, 71.

Whence did Jesus now depart? St. Matthew xv. 21.

What touching incident is here recorded? St. Matthew xv. 22–28.

By what miracle was this soon followed? St. Mark vii. 31–35.

By what command was it followed, and with what result? St. Mark vii. 36, 37.

What notable miracle was about this time repeated? St. Matthew xv. 32–38.

XXV.

Where is Jesus next found? St. Matthew xvi. 13.

What impressive discourse with His Apostles is here recorded? St. Matthew xvi. 13–15.

What notable declaration is made by Peter? St. Matthew xvi. 16.

By what benediction and promise was it followed? St. Matthew xvi. 17–19.

What command was here laid upon the Apostles? St. Matthew xvi. 20.

What revelation did Jesus now begin to unfold to His Apostles? St. Matthew xvi. 21.

To what indiscretion was Peter moved? St. Matthew xvi. 22.

What stern rebuke followed? St. Matthew xvi. 23.

What fervent exhortation? St. Matthew xvi. 24–28.

What wonderful manifestation of power and glory occurred soon after this? St. Matthew xvii. 1–8.

Who were the chosen witnesses? St. Matthew xvii. 1.

What were they commanded? St. Matthew xvii. 9.

How had Moses and Elijah long been regarded, respectively, by the Jews (as representing, respectively, the Word of God revealed in the Law and in Prophecy)?

What impressive declaration was made by Jesus at this time? St. Matthew xvii. 12.

XXVI.

By what incident was Jesus met as He descended from the scene of His Transfiguration? St. Matthew xvii. 14-16; St. Mark ix. 14-18.

What sorrowful rebuke had the Apostles incurred? St. Matthew xvii. 17.

To what were they later told their defeat was alone attributable? St. Matthew xvii. 20.

Through what was the faith needful for their work alone to be attained? St. Matthew xvii. 21.

Where did Jesus now again direct His steps? St. Mark ix. 30.

What declaration was repeated on the journey, and how received? St. Mark ix. 30-32.

To what selfish questionings were the Apostles led in contemplation of the Kingdom foretold? St. Mark ix. 33, 34.

How was their dispute answered? St. Mark ix. 35-37; St. Matthew xviii. 2-6.

By what incident was this lesson yet more beautifully impressed later? St. Matthew xix. 13-15.

XXVII.

Where did Jesus now for a time confine His ministry, and why? St. John vii. 1.

What annual Feast of the Jews was approaching? St. John vii. 2.

To what was He admonished by His kinsmen, and through what motives? St. John vii. 3-5.

What impressive answer was returned? St. John vii. 6, 7.

To what determination was Jesus led later? St. John vii. 10.

Through what region did His journey lay? St. Luke ix. 51, 52.

With what treatment did He meet, and why? St. Luke ix. 53.

To what were His disciples moved? St. Luke ix. 54.

By what answer deterred? St. Luke ix. 55, 56.

What missionary work did Jesus now again inaugurate? St. Luke x. 1.

To what places were the missioners sent? St. Luke x. 1.

What was declared concerning them thus sent? St. Luke x. 16.

Continuing His journey, what parable was spoken by Jesus, and by what suggested? St. Luke x. 25–37.

To what town did He now come, and by what incident followed? St. Luke x. 38–42.

XXVIII.

What was the significance of the Feast of Tabernacles, and when, and how commanded to be celebrated? Leviticus xxiii. 34, 39, 41.

Why was Jesus led to attend this Feast quietly and unannounced? St. John vii. 1–8.

By what inquiries and comments was His absence noted? St. John vii. 11, 12.

Where did Jesus at last make His presence known? St. John vii. 14.

What inquiry was excited by His wisdom and learning? St. John vii. 15.

What answer was returned by Jesus relating to His human capacity? St. John vii. 16-18.

With what did He now openly charge His enemies? St. John vii. 19.

Of what inconsistency were they convicted? St. John vii. 21-24.

To what injustice and violence did He thus refer? St. John v. 2-16.

What comment was elicited by His fearless words? St. John vii. 25, 26.

Through what weak evasion was confidence withheld? St. John vii. 27.

By what impressive words was it answered? St. John vii. 28, 29.

With what consequences? St. John vii. 30.

To what declaration was the populace moved? St. John vii. 31.

XXIX.

What determination was now openly manifested by the enemies of Jesus. St. John vii. 32.

What event did Jesus also openly begin to foreshow? St. John vii. 33, 34.

To what conjectures did His words give rise? St. John vii. 35.

What prophecy was thus recalled? Isaiah xi. 10-12.

How many days were included in the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles? Leviticus xxiii. 39.

What yearning invitation was Jesus moved to utter on the great day, before the dispersion of the crowd? St. John vii. 37.

What gift, as yet unrevealed, was He thus foretelling? St. John vii. 39.

How were the impressive words received? St. John vii. 40.

By what declaration was the accomplishment of prophecy unconsciously acknowledged? St. John vii. 41, 42.

What was the result of the official attempt at arrest? St. John vii. 44, 45.

What was the answer returned? St. John vii. 46.

What character introduced earlier now reappears, and under what circumstances? St. John vii. 47-52.

XXX.

What were the enemies of Jesus now lead maliciously to seek? Ground for some political charge or accusation.

In what, therefore, did they endeavor to entangle Him? In difficult points and decisions of the Mosaic law. St. John viii. 1-6.

By what solemn declaration of Himself did Jesus further incur the indignation of His adversaries? St. John viii. 12.

By what further declaration was their indignant remonstrance met? St. John viii. 14-18.

With what accusation was it also followed? St. John viii. 19.

With what solemn prediction? St. John viii. 21.

In what words was this prediction reiterated? St. John viii. 24.

What prophecy was also uttered? St. John viii. 28.

What was the effect of these utterances? St. John viii. 30.

What discourse followed? St. John viii. 31-58.

With what consequences? St. John viii. 59.

XXXI.

Where do we now find recorded one of the most notable of the works of Jesus? St. John ix.

On what day was the miracle wrought? St. John ix. 14.

What criticism on the part of His enemies did this again evoke? St. John ix. 16.

What decree had already been issued? St. John ix. 22.

To what revelation of Himself did this miracle once more lead? St. John ix. 35-37.

What declaration concerning His mission? St. John ix. 39.

What condemnation of the Jews? St. John ix. 40, 41.

How did Jesus symbolize His attitude to the world? St. John x. 7-9.

What beautiful relation did He again declare? St. John x. 11.

What did He again foretell? St. John x. 15.

What concerning the extent of His mission? St. John x. 16.

What further declaration concerning the sacrifice foretold? St. John x. 17, 18.

What diversity of sentiment was once more elicited by the words thus spoken? St. John x. 19-21.

Where is it believed Jesus now for a time withdrew? To an adjacent province known as Perea.

XXXII.

Who now returned with the report of their work to Jesus? St. Luke x. 17.

What did they declare to have been the success of their mission?

With what remarkable words did Jesus answer them? St. Luke x. 18.

What further power was conferred on them? St. Luke x. 19.

What warning against spiritual pride was at the same time administered? St. Luke x. 20.

For what did Jesus offer a fervent thanksgiving? St. Luke x. 21.

What declaration of Himself did He make? St. Luke x. 22.

What concerning His disciples? St. Luke x. 23, 24.

What memorable instruction was given by Jesus soon after this? St. Luke xi. 1-4.

What parables revealing the power of prayer? St. Luke xi. 5-13.

What charge was again brought against Jesus, followed by what reply? St. Luke xi. 14-26.

Upon what class was Jesus led to pronounce severe rebuke? St. Luke xi. 37-44.

What other class drew forth likewise His condemnation? St. Luke xi. 46-52.

To what effort did these bold words incite His enemies? St. Luke xi. 53, 54.

XXXIII.

By the recurrence of what Feast was Jesus now led once more to Jerusalem? St. John x. 22.

What was the origin and significance of this Feast? I. Kings viii. 63; II. Chronicles vii. 5; Ezra vi. 16.

Where did the people once more assemble about Jesus? S.. John x. 23.

What demand was now made of Him? St. John x. 24.

With what reply? St. John x. 25–30.

What was the effect of these words? St. John x. 31.

With what poignant question was this violence met? St. John x. 32.

What charge was made in answer? St. John x. 33.

With what response from Jesus? St. John x. 34–38.

By what renewed attempt was it followed? St. John x. 39.

Where did Jesus once more retire? St. John x. 39, 40.

What testimony was elicited by the spot and its associations? St. John x. 41, 42.

XXXIV.

Where do we find recorded events incident to this period of the life of Jesus? St. Luke xiv.

What incident afforded opportunity for imparting anew a striking lesson? St. Luke xiv. 1–6.

What noted parables were delivered at this time? St. Luke xiv. 7–11, 15–24.

By what solemn declaration was the latter followed? St. Luke xiv. 26, 27.

What parables are next recorded? St. Luke xv. 3–7, 8–10.

By what notable narrative were these followed? St. Luke xv. 11–32.

What impressive lesson was imparted through the next parable? St. Luke xvi. 1–13.

In what spirit were these truths received by certain of his hearers? St Luke xvi. 14.

To what striking narrative did this give rise? St. Luke xvi. 19–30.

What solemn declaration, demonstrated later, closed this parable? St. Luke xvi. 31.

What message was brought to Jesus at this time? St. John xi. 1-3.

With what reply received? St. John xi. 4.

To what resolve was Jesus led, and with what remonstrance on the part of the Apostles? St. John xi. 7, 8.

With what result? St. John xi. 9-16.

When Bethany was reached, what great miracle was there wrought? St. John xi. 17-44.

What was the influence of this great work? St. John xi. 45.

XXXV.

By what other result was the miracle of Bethany followed? St. John xi. 46, 47.

What notable declaration was made by the enemies of Jesus? St. John xi. 48.

Who was High Priest at this time, and what was his decision? St. John xi. 49, 50.

What prophecy had he unwittingly declared? St. John xi. 51, 52.

With what resolve did the council adjourn? St. John xi. 53.

To what was Jesus therefore led? St. John xi. 54.

What great Feast was soon to recur again? St. John xi. 55.

What was the general topic of interest and surmise among those gathering at Jerusalem? St. John xi. 56.

What command had gone forth? St. John xi. 57.

Where do we find recorded the journey made at this time by Jesus to Jerusalem? St. Luke xvii. 11; xix. 28.

By what do we find the journey marked? By notable miracles and parables.

What incident of special interest is related? St. Luke xix. 1-10.

What were the Apostles once more foretold? St. Luke xviii. 31-34.

Where did Jesus once more pause for rest on His journey? St. John xii. 1.

What tribute of affection was here offered Him? St. John xii. 2, 3.

By whom was the tribute rebuked? St. John xii. 4, 5.

With what commendation from Jesus? St. John xii. 7, 8; St. Mark xiv. 8, 9.

By what twofold attraction were crowds now drawn to Bethany? St. John xii. 9.

To what desire were the enemies of Jesus therefore excited? St. John xii. 10, 11.

XXXVI.

Where did Jesus now direct His steps? St. John xii. 12.

On what mission did He send two of the disciples as they journeyed? St. Luke xix. 29-31.

With what result? St. Luke xix. 32-35.

What further occurred, and what prophecy of old most literally fulfilled? St. Luke xix. 36-38; St. John xii. 13-15.

Where may this prophecy be found? Zachariah ix. 9.

By whom was the advancing procession met? St. John xii. 12-18.

With what sentiment was the rejoicing multitude viewed by the enemies of Jesus? St. John xii. 19.

What demand did they make? St. Luke xix. 39.

With what reply? St. Luke xix. 40.

What touching scene is here recorded? St. Luke xix. 41–44.

What question was universally excited among the strangers gathered at Jerusalem, by the triumphant entry of Jesus? St. Matthew xxi. 10.

With what response? St. Matthew xxi. 11.

XXXVII.

Where did Jesus return on the evening succeeding His triumphant entry into Jerusalem? St. Matthew xxi. 17.

Where did the early morning again find Him? St. Matthew xxi. 18; St. Mark xi. 12.

What incident occurred on the way? St. Mark xi. 13, 14.

On reaching the city where did Jesus at once repair? St. Mark xi. 15.

By what salutations was He again greeted? St. Matthew xxi. 15.

By whom again resented? St. Matthew xxi. 15, 16.

With what reply from Jesus? St. Matthew xxi. 16.

Where do we find the prophecy thus quoted? Psalm viii. 2.

By what impressive occurrence was this day in the Temple once more marked? St. Mark xi. 15, 16.

What was once more declared? St. Mark xi. 17.

What was the effect of this bold act? St. Mark xi. 18.

Where did Jesus again repair with the evening? St. Mark xi. 19.

XXXVIII.

As Jesus and His disciples returned to Jerusalem on the following morning, by what was their attention attracted? St. Mark xi. 20.

What answer was returned to the surprise excited? St. Mark xi. 21-26.

Where was Jesus again found on reaching the city? St. Mark xi. 27.

By whom was He there met, and with what demand, referring to the event of the day previous? St. Mark xi. 27, 28.

With what difficult question was the attack met? St. Mark xi. 29, 30.

In what did its difficulty consist? St. Mark xi. 31-32.

What answer was necessarily returned? St. Mark xi. 33.

What parables were delivered by Jesus at this time? St. Matthew xxi. 28-32; 33-44.

What was the effect of the parables thus uttered? St. Matthew xxi. 45, 46.

What more impressive one yet followed? St. Matthew xxii. 1-14.

To what were His enemies again stirred? St. Matthew xxii. 15.

What was the first effort toward the accomplishment of the desired purpose? St. Matthew xxii. 16-22.

By whom, and with what question was Jesus next assailed? St. Matthew xxii.

What was the next effort? St. Matthew xxii. 34-40.

By what question were the questioners now confronted, and with what result? St. Matthew xxii. 41-46.

What memorable incident is recorded closely following the discourse related? St. Mark xii. 41-44.

XXXIX.

What request was brought to Jesus while thus in the Temple, and by whom presented? St. John xii. 20–22.

With what impressive reply was it met? St. John xii. 23.

By what words followed? St. John xii, 24–26.

To what emotion and prayer was Jesus suddenly moved? St. John xii. 27.

By what thrilling answer followed? St. John xii. 28.

With what comments was the voice received, and how explained? St. John xii. 29, 30.

What solemn declaration followed? St. John xii. 31, 32.

With what question and answer were the words received? St. John xii. 34–36.

What statement indicates the hardness of the hearts yet about Jesus? St. John xii. 37.

What prophecy herein fulfilled? St. John xii. 37–40.

What scathing denunciations were spoken by Jesus? St. Matthew xxiii. 13–33.

What prophecy did He utter? St. Matthew xxiii. 34–36.

To what yearning lament was He again moved? St. Matthew xxiii. 37.

What solemn declaration accompanied His departure from the Temple? St. Matthew xxiii. 38, 39.

XL.

Where is it believed Jesus spent the fourth day of this eventful week? St. Matthew xxiv. 3.

By whom was He attended, and what request was made of Him? St. Matthew xxiv. 3; St. Mark xii. 3, 4.

To what did this request refer? St. Mark xiii. 1, 2.

Of what great event to come did Jesus now speak more plainly? St. Luke xxi. 20–24.

By what did He declare this event should be accompanied? St. Luke xxi. 10, 11.

What other prophecy did He utter? St. Luke xxi. 12–16.

With what comforting assurance accompanied? St. Luke xxi. 13–15.

What great promise and event was declared as the culmination of all? St. Luke xxi. 27.

Of what were His hearers warned? St. Luke xxi. 8.

What solemn admonition was likewise given? St. Luke xxi. 34–36.

What declaration concerning the Day thus foretold? St. Mark xiii. 32, 33.

XLI.

What striking parables were spoken by Jesus, while thus on the Mount of Olives? St. Matthew xxv. 1–12; 14–30; 32–46.

What was the great lesson imparted by the first? St. Matthew xxv. 13.

What by the second? St. Matthew xxv. 29.

What by the third? St. Matthew xxv. 40–45.

What is recorded regarding the sentiment toward Jesus at this time? St. John xii. 42, 43.

What declaration was once more made by Jesus? St. John xii. 44–47.

What did He declare concerning them who should reject Him? St. John xii. 48.

What were the enemies of Jesus still plotting? St. Luke xxii. 2.

What offer was now soon made them? St. Luke xxii. 3, 4.

How was the offer received? St. Luke xxii. 5.

On what conditions was it sealed? St. Matthew xxvi. 15, 16.

By whom had this treachery long since been foretold? Zechariah xi. 12.

XLII.

As the Passover drew near, of what did Jesus more plainly foretell His disciples? St. Matthew xxvi. 2.

On what mission did He send two of the Twelve on the morning of the Feast? St. Mark xiv. 12–16.

When did He join them, with the others? St. Mark xiv. 17.

With what words did Jesus gather them about Him at the table? St. Luke xxii. 15.

Of what had the Apostles again been disputing? St. Luke xxii. 24.

Through what lowly act did Jesus now convey a needed lesson? St. John xiii. 4, 5.

By whom was protest offered? St. John xiii. 6.

With what answer from Jesus? St. John xiii. 7.

What was later declared the purpose of this act? St. John xiii. 12–16.

What sad announcement was made by Jesus as they sat at meat? St. Mark xiv. 18.

How were the words recived? St. Mark xiv. 19.

How did the guilty one finally betray himself? St. Matthew xxvi. 25.

What command was soon given him by Jesus? St. John xiii. 27.

How was the command interpreted by those present? St. John xiii. 28, 29.

XLIII.

When Judas had left the assembly, in what impressive act did Jesus engage? St. Matthew xxvi. 26–29.

What solemn words spoken earlier were thus recalled? St. John vi. 53–56.

In what were the Jewish nation engaged at this hour? St. Luke xxii. 7.

What was the conspicuous feature of this commemoration? Exodus xii. 3–8.

What words were recalled by the association of ideas thus suggested? St. John i. 29.

Of what did Jesus now again speak plainly to His Apostles? St. John xiii. 33.

By what declaration was it followed? St. John xiii. 36, 37.

With what impressive answer from Jesus? St. John xiii. 38.

With what emotion had the previous announcement of Jesus been received? St. John xvi. 6.

What comforting discourse therefore followed? St. John xiv., xv., xvi.

What great promise recurred repeatedly? St. John xiv. 16, 17, 26; xv. 26.

What beautiful relationship did Jesus declare as existing between Himself and believers? St. John xv. 1–5.

What did He declare the only true pledge of love toward Him? St. John xiv. 21.

What was to be the visible bond of discipleship? St. John xiv. 34, 35.

With what sublime prayer was the evening closed? St. John xvii. 1–26.

XLIV.

Where did Jesus and His companions direct their steps at the close of the Passover Supper? St. Mark xiv. 26.

With what saddening announcement was the journey accompanied, and with what striking prophecy? St. Mark xiv. 27, 28.

What declaration did it again elicit, and with what reply? St. Mark xiv. 29–31.

Where did Jesus, with three of the Apostles, now repair? St. Mark xiv. 32.

With what words, and what command? St. Mark xiv. 34.

What impressive record follows? St. Mark xiv. 35–42.

By what immediately followed? St. Mark xiv. 43–45.

With what inquiry did Jesus meet the intruders? St. John xviii. 4.

What was the effect of His words and composure? St. John xviii. 6.

What stipulation did He alone make in surrendering Himself. St. John xviii. 7, 8.

By what incident was the arrest interrupted? St. John xviii. 10, 11; St. Luke xxii. 51.

Of what were the assailants calmly reminded? St. Luke xxii. 52, 53.

What followed? St. Luke xxii. 54.

XLV.

Before whom was Jesus at once led upon His arrest? St. John xviii. 13, 14.

With whom assembled? St. Matthew xxvi. 57.

What effort was at once made, and with what success? St. Matthew xxvi. 59, 60.

What accusation was alone brought? St. Matthew xxvi. 61.

How was the accusation received, and by what demand followed? St. Matthew xxvi. 63.

What impressive answer returned? St. Matthew xxvi. 64.

What verdict was now rendered? St. Matthew xxvi. 65, 66.

To what ignominy was Jesus now subjected? St. Matthew xxvi. 67, 68.

By whom had He been followed to the House of the High Priest? St. Matthew xxvi. 58.

What occurrence is now related? St. Matthew xxvi. 69-74.

By what was the last denial followed? St. Luke xxii. 61, 62.

XLVI.

To whom was Jesus now led by the Jews? St. Luke xxiii. 1.

What accusations were here brought against Him? St. Luke xxiii. 2.

What question was asked by Pilate, and how answered? St. Luke xxiii. 3.

What verdict was returned by Pilate? St. Luke xxiii. 4.

With what effect on the accusers? St. Luke xxiii. 5.

To whom was Jesus now sent, and why? St. Luke xxiii. 6, 7.

With what sentiments was He received? St. Luke xxiii. 8.

What details of trial now followed? St. Luke xxiii. 9-11.

To whom was Jesus then returned? St. Luke xxiii. 11.

With what address and suggestion received? St. Luke xxiii. 13-16.

Of what established custom did Pilate seek avail? St. Luke xxiii. 17.

How was the proposition received? St. Luke xxiii. 18.

What further efforts followed, and with what success? St. Luke xxiii. 20-23.

Followed by what result? St. Luke xxiii. 24.

XLVII.

By what was Pilate's sentence of Jesus followed? St. John xix. 1-3.

How was Jesus again brought before the crowd? St. John xix. 5.

How received? St. John xix. 6.

By what was Pilate led to renewed efforts in His behalf? St. John xix. 7-12.

By what induced finally to surrender Him? St. John xix. 12-16.

How had the recognition of the Sovereignty of Jesus been made, and received? St. John xix. 14, 15.

At what hour of the morning did the long trial terminate? St. John xix. 14.

What now followed? St. John xix. 16, 17.

What was found to be necessary, as the procession left the City? St. Luke xxiii. 26.

By what incident was the journey further marked? St. Luke xxiii. 27-31.

To what spot was Jesus led? St. Luke xxiii. 33; St. Mark xv. 22.

By whom was He accompanied? St. Mark xv. 27.

What meanwhile is related of Judas Iscariot? St. Matthew xxvii. 3-15.

What prophecy strikingly fulfilled in that which followed St. Matthew xxvii. 6-10.

XLVIII.

What length of time was consumed on the way to Calvary, and the preparations there needful? St. John xix. 14; St. Mark xv. 25.

What now took place? St. Luke xxiii. 33.

What superscription had Pilate prepared for the Cross? St. John xix. 19.

What demand was now made, and what answer returned? St. John xix. 21, 22.

What prophecy was now strikingly fulfilled? St. John xix. 23, 24.

To what revilings was Jesus now subjected? St. Mark xv. 29-32.

With what words from the Cross were they met? St. Luke xxiii. 34.

What request was uttered by one of the malefactors? St Luke xxiii. 39-42.

With what reply from Jesus? St. Luke xxiii. 43.

To whom were the next words addressed? St. John xix. 26, 27.

What impressive occurrence is now recorded? St. Luke xxiii. 44.

By what attended? St. Luke xxiii. 45.

What words were next heard from the Cross? St. Mark xv. 34.

What the next? St. John xix. 28.

What followed? St. John xix. 29, 30.

What the last words recorded? St. Luke xxiii. 46.

What involuntary confession was elicited by the solemn scene? St. Mark xv. 39.

XLIX.

What request was now made of Pilate, and for what reason? St. John xix. 31.

With what result concerning the body of Jesus? St. John xix. 33.

What test of death was resorted to, and with what result? St. John xix. 34.

What prophecy was thus strikingly fulfilled? St. John xix. 36, 37.

Where will these prophecies be found? Psalms xxxiv. 20; Zechariah xii. 10.

What was also impressively recalled by the first? Exodus xii. 46.

What request was now made of Pilate, and by whom? St. John xix. 38.

What is told concerning the applicant? St. Luke xxiii. 50.

By whom was he accompanied in that which followed? St. John xix. 39.

What was now done? St. John xix. 40.

Where was the body of Jesus laid? St. John xix. 41; St. Matthew xxvii. 59, 60.

What prophecy was herein fulfilled? Isaiah liii. 9.

Who still remained at the sepulchre when all was done? St. Matthew xxvii. 61.

Who now waited upon Pilate, and with what demand? St. Matthew xxvii. 62, 64.

With what result? St. Matthew xxvii. 65, 66.

L.

Who was again among the first at the tomb of Jesus on the morning of the third day? St. John xx. 1.

What discovery awaited her, and to whom did she hasten? St. John xx. 1, 2.

How was the message received, and by what followed? St. John xx. 1–10.

By what was the departure of the Apostles followed. St. John xx. 11–17.

To whom was the occurrence at once related? St. John xx. 18.

By whom was Jesus also early seen on this morning of His resurrection? St. Matthew xxviii. 1-9.

With what message were they commissioned? St. Matthew xxviii. 10.

What prophetic words were recalled by this message? St. Matthew xxvi. 32.

By whom were the Chief Priests now sought, and with what report? St. Matthew xxviii. 11.

With what action on the part of the Council? St. Matthew xxviii. 12-15.

Where do we find other record of the resurrection of Christ? St. Mark xvi. 1-8; St. Luke xxiv. 1-10.

What details are given by St. Matthew alone? St. Matthew xxviii. 2-4.

What mention is made by St. Luke alone? St. Luke xxiv. 11.

LI.

What is the next recorded appearance of the risen Jesus? St. Luke xxiv. 13-31.

By what immediately followed? St. Luke xxiv. 33-35.

Succeeded by what occurrence? St. Luke xxiv. 36.

With what effect? St. Luke xxiv. 37.

How were the spectators reassured? St. Luke xxiv. 38-40.

By what further assured? St. Luke xxiv. 41-43.

What was now recalled to them? St. Luke xxiv. 44.

What portions of Scripture are here solemnly ratified?

What further discourse followed? St. Luke xxiv. 45-48.

On what day did this occur? St. John xx. 19.

What additional details are given us? St. John xx. 20-23.

Which of the Apostles was absent at this gathering? St. John xx. 24.

What was his answer when informed of that which had occurred? St. John xx. 25.

What occurrence is next related? St. John xx. 26-28.

What declaration was uttered by Jesus? St. John xx. 29.

What statement follows the record thus given? St. John xx. 30.

What impressive motive is assigned to the Gospel record? St. John xx. 31.

LII.

What appearance of Jesus next finds record? St. John xxi. 1.

Under what circumstances? St. John xxi. 2-8.

By whom was He first recognized? St. John xxi. 7.

By whom joyously welcomed? St. John xxi. 7.

What narration follows? St. John xxi. 8-14.

What interesting interview? St. John xxi. 15-17.

What was doubtless recalled by the three-fold query? St. Matthew xxvi. 69-74.

What future event was foreshadowed to St. Peter? St. John xxi. 18, 19.

What further discourse is recorded? St. John xxi. 20-22.

To what erroneous impression giving rise? St. John xxi. 23.

What period of time did Jesus now remain with His Apostles? Acts i. 3.

How were these days occupied?

What explicit command was given? Acts i. 4, 5.

What promise confirming one already given? Acts i. 8.

What question was addressed to Jesus, and with what answer? Acts i. 6, 7.

Where were they assembled for this last interview? St. Luke xxiv. 50.

What was the last command? St. Matthew xxviii. 19, 20.

By what were these words followed? Acts i. 9.

What the last act recorded? St. Luke xxiv. 50.

What the final record? Acts i. 10, 11.

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